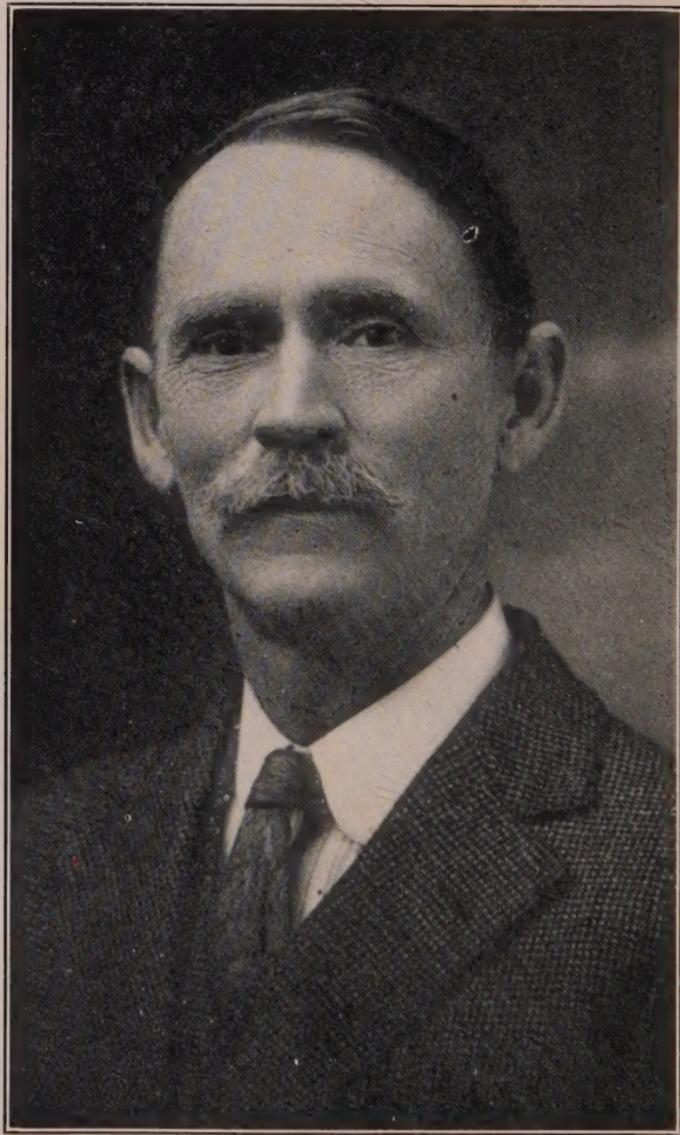


HEART ECHOES FROM OLD SHELBY



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Douglas Robbins

HEART ECHOES FROM OLD SHELBY AND OTHER POEMS

By DOUGLAS DOBBINS
Author of Quarrytown

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PREFACE

It would have been pleasing, indeed, to the author of this book had he been able to sit dignifiedly in his study and have had a great literary success, such as other authors enjoy, come upon him. But it would *not* come. The mountain of success would *not* come to this poor, literary Mahomet, and so he just had to get out and hustle after it. It was ever thus in this particular life, and the author has begun to believe it is almost providential. And as it is with everything the good Lord orders and directs, so it was with this: It was the best thing, after all, that could have happened.

It *was* humiliating, to a certain extent, to get out and show one's friends the plans and specifications of the forthcoming book; but this sense of humiliation soon wore away, and a sense of delight—delight in meeting old friends, and re-visiting old-time scenes—took its place.

We are glad to present this book to our friends and patrons. It has many defects and imperfections—we grant it. But no poet has ever written with a more genuine poetical inspiration—enthusiasm—thrill—whatever you may be pleased to call it—than has animated the writing of these pages. Some of the utterances may be gross, some may be egotistical, there may be some in which we ride the pronoun “I” too much, there may be others wherein we shall give offense to the technical, the fastidious, the over-nice. But, in some instances, if we have done anything we are sorry for, we are glad of it!

There are some so-called experts in music who reject the grand, old songs of the people because of their harmony and cadence. They are very suspicious of anything that thrills the soul and pleases the ear. What they affect, what they claim is the real thing in music, sounds about as well to the average ear as the

harmony produced by "a corn-stalk fiddle" and a "shoe-string bow." And there is a class of critics in literature of the same ilk. A Riley comes along and for thirty years has to combat this same critical crowd, before they recognize his superb singing. But when the common sense verdict of mankind, in spite of their clamor, writes the seal of approval upon his greatness, then they are ready to out-Herod Herod in doing him honor.

We love this class of critics, and we wouldn't dispose of them if we could. They constitute a sort of "thorn in the flesh," and are necessary to perfect our powers and lopp off our surplus egotism. But we have written in conformity to "the native feelings strong," in response to our own enthusiasm, and if they like it, well and good. If not, we might suggest that there is a place prepared for them from the foundation of the world! Here we pause. We won't even tell them to go there!

The author of this book believes that there can be no charge whatever of plagiarism placed against him. A person, who, as a school boy, has conned over and committed to memory hundreds of poems until they have become a very part of himself, will unconsciously use these expressions at times. But we do desire to say that the poem entitled "Memories suggested, etc.," owes much of its merit to a beautiful little poem entitled "A Memory," by Orth Stein, a southern writer.

THE AUTHOR.

Franklin, Indiana, October the 6th, 1916.

HEART-ECHOES FROM OLD SHELBY.

“HEART-ECHOES FROM OLD SHELBY!”

Down the swiftly flying years
Comes a gentle retrospection
That it fills mine eyes with tears,
Bearing with it sainted mem’ries
Of the days departed long,
Thrilling all the halls of being
Like the cadence of a song !

“HEART-ECHOES FROM OLD SHELBY!”

Olden visions bring to me,
And the dear forms rise in rapture
That I’ve longed so much to see,
When the burdens that I’ve carried
Have produced a deadened spot,
And the tears of disappointment
Have o’erflooded, blistering hot !

“HEART-ECHOES FROM OLD SHELBY!”

Come and soothe my wounded soul
With the precious balm of childhood,
With a love that made me whole,
Knit again the ties that held me,—
Since my heart was wont to roam,—
And draw me back to shelter,
Blessed shelter of my home !

“HEART-ECHOES FROM OLD SHELBY!”

Thrilling, tender, deep and strong,
Come and bless my life a-weary
As the years go swift along,
Till the past comes back in glory,
And with heaven joins a hand,
And I see it all so clearly,
And by seeing—understand.

THE OLD SHELBY COUNTY FAIR.

Oh, yes; I'm shore 'at I shall go
To the Old Shelby County Fair;
All the folks 'at I ust to know
Air more than likely to be there.

I'll see frien's named Smith an' Brown,
An' Howard Lee'll come drivin' down,
And Carey, Bent, from Brandywine—
A leetle old, but feelin' fine!
An' Sidney Conger—don't know Sid?—
I thought most ever'body did!
An' old man Yarling onct was Mike,
A drivin' in from Waldron pike
With yaller dust upon his hair—
They'll ever lastin' one be there!

Why don't you know 'at I don't keer
To see that great, big bulgin' steer,
Nur the engines, nur hear 'em toot,
Jist git my han's all over soot!
But I'm a goin' to see the men,
An' shake their blamed, ole paws again,
An' loaf aroun' an' think onct more
Forgotten thoughts—the thoughts o' yore;
Hear voices in the same ole tone
I ust to hear in days long flown;
An' 'f I should softly wipe an eye,
An' blow my nose, 't will signify,
That in some fair a long ago
Were some I can't find high ur low!

I'm not goin' so much to talk,
Nur stan' aroun' an' gawk an' gawk;
Nur "rubber neck" up in the sky
At the ole balloon a sailin' high;
Nur go an' see the garden truck,
Nur hear them chickens cluck an' cluck;
Nur yit them ternal agents vie
To see wholl tell the biggest lie;

THE OLD SHERB COUNTY FAIR.



Nur watch the man with patent churn—
It takes a crank a crank to turn—
But I'm a goin' jist to see
Ole faces that air dear to me;
An' then those faces will recall
A former day in airy fall
When dear, ole pap an' all the throng,
An' me, a little kid along,
(Shoes too tight an' toe-head hair!)
Went troopin' out to see the fair—
Oh, memory's golden sunshine
Forever resteth there!

OH, SAVIOR MINE.

Oh, Savior mine, thy precious gifts o'erflow me,
Like sun-kissed waves that beat upon the shore,
And racing out for untold-leagues before thee—
Such boundless love mine eyes can ne'er explore!

And what am I: so small, so weak, ungrateful,
That I should have rich treasures sent from thee?
No comeliness of soul, a past so hateful,
Yet, "Whosoever will" applies to me!

Oh, that I might forever but be humble,
A modest child with just my hand in thine,
To walk by faith, though tempests roar and rumble,
And never doubt thee, nor thy power divine!

THE GIRLS O' SHELBYVILLE.

Them ole-time girls o' Shelbyville—
I never shall forgit!—
They ain't no folks much purtier
'At I have seen as yit!
In my day dreams I can see 'em—
I can see 'em in the night
When the thoughts o' olden pleasures
Steal upon me soft an' light!

My heart jist bubbles over
An' mine eyes grow moist an' blear;
In fancy I behold 'em
As they onct more re-appear;
I can hear 'em laugh an' chatter
As they ust to do as when
They set a-laughin' at us boys
A-thinkin' we was men!

I wisht I had a mighty power,
A kind o' magic wand,
I'd touch onct more those pleasant days
So long 'at's past an' gone,
An' bring again those dear, sweet girls
With all their dash an' thrill—
Those summer-hearted, splendid girls,
The girls o' Shelbyville!

An' may I not—oh soul of mine!—
Believe some blissful shore
Is lyin' ready, all-prepared
Where lovers part no more;
Where love a perfect blossom blooms—
No frost to blight or kill!—
Where I shall meet as in my youth,
The girls o' Shelbyville!

BACK TO OLD SHELBY.

(This poem was written in response to an invitation given by Senator Robert W. Harrison, the author's friend and classmate, to attend a banquet of the Shelbyville High School Alumni Association.)

Some day, some day, I'll wander back once more
To Shelby county's old, familiar scenes;
Some day with eager mind I'll ponder o'er
Forgotten spots I knew before
When I was young and in my teens!

Some day, some day, I'll trace with ardent feet
The places where I roamed in boyish glee,
And then my heart shall warm with quickened beat,
Mine eyes shall fill with transports sweet,
When thoughts of youth come back to me!

Some day, some day, I'll stand beside the mound
Beneath of which was laid to peaceful rest
Within the cold and sadly solemn ground
Till final trump of time shall sound,
My truest friend, my mother blest!

Long years ago, I left my native heath,
My heart was then with courage beating high;
I fondly hoped—Fame's golden dome beneath—
That I should wear a victor's wreath,
And taste of glory by and by!

And some of those who were my classmates then
Have climb-ed high upon the temple's wall,
And carved their names in sight of all the men
Who've since grown great by tongue or pen,
And I—I am not great at all!

And now, ye kindly ask that I shall come
And sit and smile among the famous few,
And mingling in the old-time throngs be dumb,
And hear them shout and beat the drum
In praise of those who speak to you!

When in those other days in class debate
No program was complete or wholly right
Unless my humble name was on the slate,
And I was given a leading rate,
I ne'er could shine a lesser light!

And now, dear Bob, I may not come to see,
My friends and classmates that in former years
I knew so well and loved so tenderly,
Because—I may as well to thee
Explain the reason of my fears!

Long have I chased Fame's iridescent dreams—
Hid 'neath the rainbow's end, a pot of gold!—
I've digged the bed of many a desert stream,
I've searched the rugged mountain's seam,
I've followed paths forlorn and cold!

But th' illusive phantoms e'er have fled,
They're always just beyond my trembling reach,
And worn and weary, more and more I dread
Life's ceaseless strife and grind for bread,
Fond hopes deferred, my zeal impeach!

The tide of years has swiftly run away,
Since hope and youthful courage were so strong;
I stand far out upon the sands to-day,
And watch the ebbing waters play
The naked bars and reefs among!

And, Robert, I had hoped when I should go
Back to the scenes of life's sweet, golden morn
To wear a victor's honored wreath and show
My early friends my greatness, so
They'd praise the spot where I was born!

And ere I come, but let me try once more
To catch this phantom ere it be too late;
Perhaps, this time shall be the happy score,
And she shall come within my¹ door,
And I shall then be rich and great!

Ah, then I'll come and mingle once again
With friends and classmates as in days gone by;
I'll peer into forgotten faces then,
And clasp the hands of boys now men,
Nor heed the moments as they fly!

DOROTHY.

She has gone where the rainbow never fades,
Nor the shimmering sun sinks low;
Where no clouding of sorrow ever shades—
But, Dorothy, oh, we did love thee so!

The home is so dark and its halls are so drear,
And mother's heart—it is lonesome still,
For those tender tones she has loved to hear—
Such wondrous place our darlings fill!

But think of heaven! oh, radiant place,
So beautiful and bright and fair;
Alight with God's most loving grace—
Welcoming heaven, with Dorothy there!

THOSE DAYS LONG AGO.

Those days long ago, I remember them so,
 And I long for their quiet and rest;
When a barefooted boy, with a heart full of joy,
 I "turned in" like a bird to its nest;
O the sun's never shone in the days that have flown
 Since then with such radiant beams;
And the clouds in the west, from earth's line to crest,
 Were painted in colors of dreams!

And that bowlful of cream and the bread, it did seem,
 When my mother prepared me the dish,
The sweetest, the best, in my wonderful zest,
 That ever a mortal could wish;
And the snug feather bed, in the loft overhead,
 Where I slept through the night-tide till day,
Was so snug and so warm, that the wind could not harm,
 Though it crept through the cracks in the clay!

Oh, remembered for aye, be that blessed day,
 For the touch of her hand in the night,
Of my mother who crept to our bed while we slept,
 To see if her boys were all right;
All my lifelong I'll bless her devoted caress,
 As she smoothed the soft covers around;
I hear her sweet prayer as she stood o'er me there:
 "Lord, thy grace on my darlings abound!"

I have mingled since then with the children of men;
 I have wandered from prairie to shore,
But such love as was shown by my mother alone,
 I shall win on this earth nevermore;
But across the abyss, in the realms of bliss,
 Where my Savior my welcome shall keep,
I expect there to view Him whose great love so true,
 Was the Fountain where mother drank deep!

THE OLD-TIME SONGS.

The Old-Time Songs! The Old-Time Songs!

They echo through my soul!

Still for their chimes my spirit longs;

How many faces they recall,

How many spells the senses thrall,

As on mine ear they roll!

Sometimes, like tones of pealing bells,

They sharply strike once more;

And as each note distinctly swells,

I see again the distant spires,

Reflecting back the golden fires,

From evening sun before!

At times, so softly sweet and clear,

Their ringing words restore

My mother's face and bring her near;

Resounding from the past remote,

Her pleading, tender voice I note,

As heard in days of yore!

Again, the scenes of "love's young dream"

Come up before mine eyes;

I see a beauteous maid and seem

To catch the love-light in her face

As quick the tender thoughts to trace

As in her mind they rise!

Oh, songs of yore, those olden strains,

Ye make me younger grow;

Ye give again the joys and pains,

Ye send the sunshine and the rains,

In all your sweet but sad refrains,

That once my youth did know!

And when on distant strands I move,
And list the heavenly score,
Enraptured by my Father's love,
I hope to hear the radiant throng,
Strike golden harps and start in song,
Those tender strains once more !

IF FATHER WERE LIVING.

If father were living today
Ah, then would I hie me away
To the homely, old cottage once more
And I'd sit by the old kitchen door,
On a bench 'neath the big locust tree,
Just my dear, loving father and me—
If father were living today !

If father were living today,
How quickly I'd travel away
To the home of my boyhood again,
And we'd walk down the cool, shady lane,
Where the odor of fall's in the trees,
And the ripening fruits scent the breeze,
And to him would I gladly explain
About my life's failure and pain—
If father were living today !

If father were living today,
I'd steal, oh, so softly away,
And I'd knock at the old-fashioned door
Where so often I've seen him before,
And it seems if I'd just step inside,
My cares would no longer abide,
And I'd be happy and free
As I once used to be,
A sailor by storm-wind oppressed,
Finding safely the haven of rest,
And I'd sleep with a perfect delight,
With the old scenes around me at night—
If father were living today !

MY DAY DREAMS.

Oh, those airy, fairy castles
That I've builded all my days,
From my youth and early manhood
Till the sun in setting rays
Casts its shadow down the pathway
Whence I've come with bleeding feet,
Facing storm and blinding tempest—
Yet those day dreams still are sweet!

Oh, those dear, entrancing treasures
That I've seen in mental sight;
Oh, those soul-uplifting raptures,
That I've felt in vision bright;
No wealth of mine or market
In the whole world can compete
With such psychic stores of glory—
And those day dreams yet are sweet!

Oh, the riches and the honor
That just shortly should be mine;
Oh, the smile of worldly grandeur
That should o'er my pathway shine;
Oh, the gleaming of the golden sun
That rose my morn to greet,
Such beauty never was in fact—
Those day dreams were so sweet!

But I've met with saddest failure,
And I've stumbled with my load,
And my scalding tears have blinded
Till I couldn't see the road,
But I've still had hope and courage
Spite of rain and mist and sleet,
That some day the way would brighten—
Oh, those day dreams are so sweet!

And it may be that the end of life
Shall come and find me still,
A-struggling on with blasted hopes,
A slipping down the hill—
But, bless God, there is a crystal shore
Where never more my feet
Shall slip or stumble or be sore,
Where day dreams e'er are sweet!

A GENTLE REBUKE.

[In response to a well-written and graceful poem by Mr. Alonzo L. Rice, praising Force and Military Prowess.]

Nay, nay, Alonzo, nail it down,
Your coin is spurious, see?
“Love rules the camp, the court, the grove,”
And rules both you and me.
Since when our mothers to their babes
Sang tender words of love,
No life is ruled by Force and Might,
But God’s sweet grace above!

Aladdin’s story you have heard—
His foe with knowledge keen
Had sought to ruin and destroy
The youth who stood between
Him and his triumph, urged
With cunning purpose sly,
The boy demand the very thing
That brought destruction nigh!

And so may you: By praising Force,
And making God of Might,
Turn heel upon the God of love
And plunge your soul in night;
And when across Time’s darkening shore,
The shades of death hang drear,
You call upon the God of Love,
He may not deign to hear!

THE CHURCH AT WALDRON.

The little, old church down at Waldron,
I remember it long ago;
I used to go there in the days gone by—
I was younger than now, you know.

I made a speech there in the eighties,
On temp'rance or some such theme;
I'd wonderful idees o' savin' the world,
Dreamed many a ponderous dream!

But the old world just kept waggin',
And the efforts made by me,
Did about as much good as the woman,
Who with tineup dipped the sea!

I can't help o' thinkin', however,
Of the radiant dreams o' youth,
And it's pleasant, too, to remember,
I was strugglin' for what I called Truth!

The shallows and ripples of older days
Are surrounding on every hand,
The mistakes of my life have been many,
But a few of my days have been grand,

But whenever I think of those old, old days,
And the zeal of a loyal heart,
I say in my soul: "Oh, Father above,
Perhaps, in it all thou hadst part!"

We never may know though we strive and we pray,
What fruit our actions may bear,
But the Father who gathers the harvest at last,
Will see and reward us—somewhere!

THE TWILIGHT HOUR.

The summer's sun has dropped behind the west,
And gentle zephyrs softly kiss the cheek;
This fading light has power to soothe the breast,
And bid the aching heart be calm and meek !

The flaming orb that shone like beacon torch,
Has quite withdrawn his with'ring power,
And now the leaf and bud has ceased to scorch,
For came, as come it must, the setting hour !

And so it was: the raging fire of youth,
Burned like a fever in my ardent brain,
And I was prone to override in sooth
Both friend and foeman in its unchecked reign !

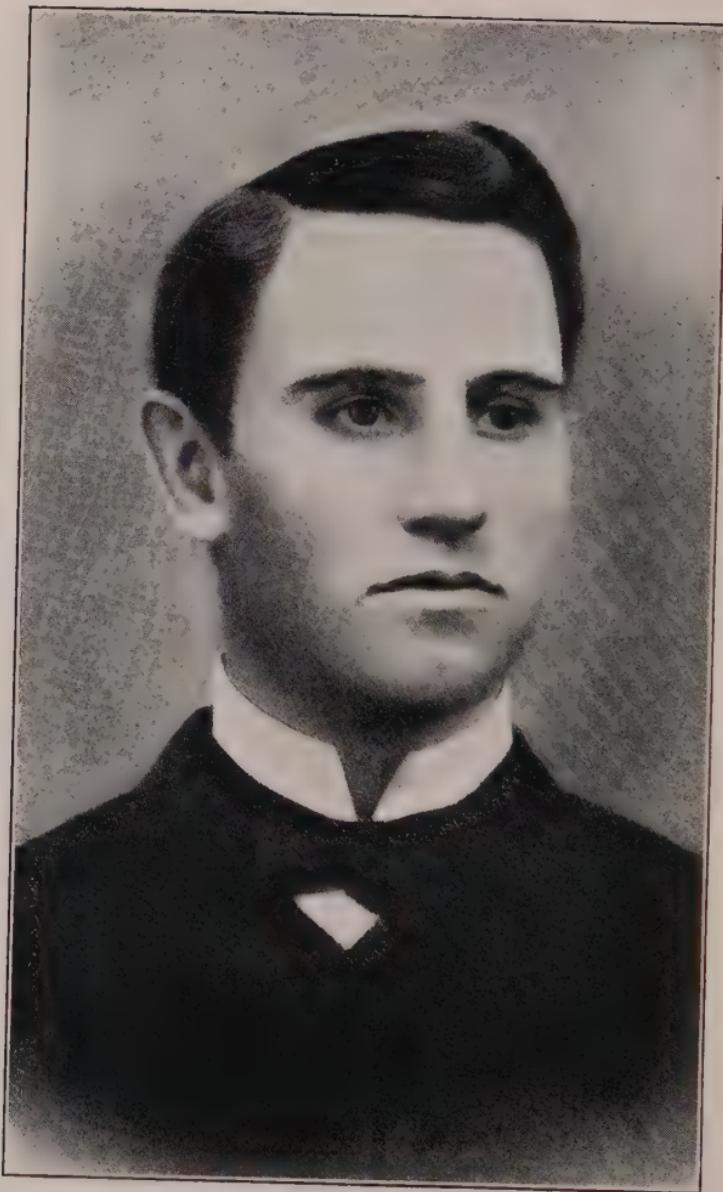
But now a holy calm these fires assuage;
For lo ! the softer twilight hour is nigh;
Serene, I watch the silver dews of age
Distill and softly fall from jeweled sky !

So sweet and quiet is this latter span
With perfect trust in God and faith in all,
Wherein my soul may love and pray and plan,
While stiller, deeper shades around me fall !

And when earth's night has faded quite away,
And all its shadows, all its dews are flown,
I hope to hail the dawn of brighter day
Than this poor, waiting mortal yet has known !

MY DARLING'S WOUND.

My sweet, little girl held up her arm,
And said with smile and tear:
Oh, papa, dear, look here, what harm,
A flea bite bit me here !



JAMES T. CAUGHEY.

TO MY DEPARTED FRIEND.

In memory of *James T. Caughey*, friend and classmate, who departed this life, while the splendor of youth was "in the morning clouds," while the author, "lingering on until the noon is past, has felt the heat and burden of the day."

Thou hast gone to a far-distant haven,
Whence no sail to return is unfurled;

Thy craft on this shore,
May be seen nevermore,

Thou hast sailed for the far-away world!

Thy barque has passed out through the offing,
Where the night-tides and tempests contend,

With a rumble and roar
As they beat on the shore,

Oh, the waves racing far with the wind!

No more shall I, longing, behold thee,
Nor list they brave tones to recall;

That far-distant Aidenn
Those dear tones may gladden,

But on earth shall thine accents ne'er fall!

Some day as Time's changes pass o'er me,
I shall launch my frail barque on that sea,

And prepare to explore
The way to that shore,

The route that was taken by thee!

And shall tremblingly sail from the harbor,
And out on the billowy wave,

While the sun in the west
Shall kindle each crest,

And risk the great Pilot to save!

And later as Fate's change involves me
I shall anchor my boat in the bay,
 And trust I shall land
 On that beautiful strand,
And walk with its throng up the way!

And praise God, if I pass through the gateway,
At the place where my ship drops her chain,
 I may join with the throng
 In a glorified song,
Like the notes of a seaman's refrain!

And then, dear friend, I shall find thee,
Where the roses forever entwine,
 And the summer skies o'er,
 May grow dull nevermore,
Like the days of my boyhood and thine!

OUR PRAYERS.

Sometimes we pray for sunshine clear
 When God knows cloud is best;
Sometimes we pray for flowers to cheer—
 God sends the nettles lest

The spoiled child may fail to see
 His tender love in all,
And lost in self and vanity,
 May not obey his call!

"THE ROSY WINE."

[Suggested by reading Mr. Rice's poem entitled: The Legend of Wine.]

Oh, Rosy Wine, oh, Rosy Wine!
What siren's awful sting is thine;
I may, indeed, awhile forget
Life's fitful fever and its fret,
And dream sweet dreams so rare and fine!

Oh, Rosy Wine, oh, Rosy Wine!
What dreadful aftermath is thine;
Thy rosy dreams so soon are fled,
Thine iridescent dreams are dead,
And life becomes one sad repine!

Oh, Rosy Wine, oh, Rosy Wine!
To steal from me all things divine;
To snatch my fadeless crown away,
And all my happy faith to slay,
And leave me helpless, crushed, supine!

Oh, Rosy Wine, oh, Rosy Wine!
I spurn such tawdry joy as thine;
God's solemn ages are too vast,
To waste his days in sodden caste,
Unclouded, clear, my life shall shine!

Oh, Rosy Wine, oh, Rosy Wine!
Thou shalt not steal such wealth of mine;
Thou shalt not strip me naked, poor,
Of honor, virtue, heaven's lure,
And to the shades, my soul assign!

Oh, Rosy Wine, oh, Rosy Wine!
What wrecks by thee, life's highways line;
And woman's cheeks are wet with tears,
And children's screams and drunken leers
Destroy the good that else might shine!

Oh, Rosy Wine, oh, Rosy Wine!
A fearful reckoning is thine;
When God shall march across the tide,
His mighty angels by his side,
He will to thee fit wage assign!

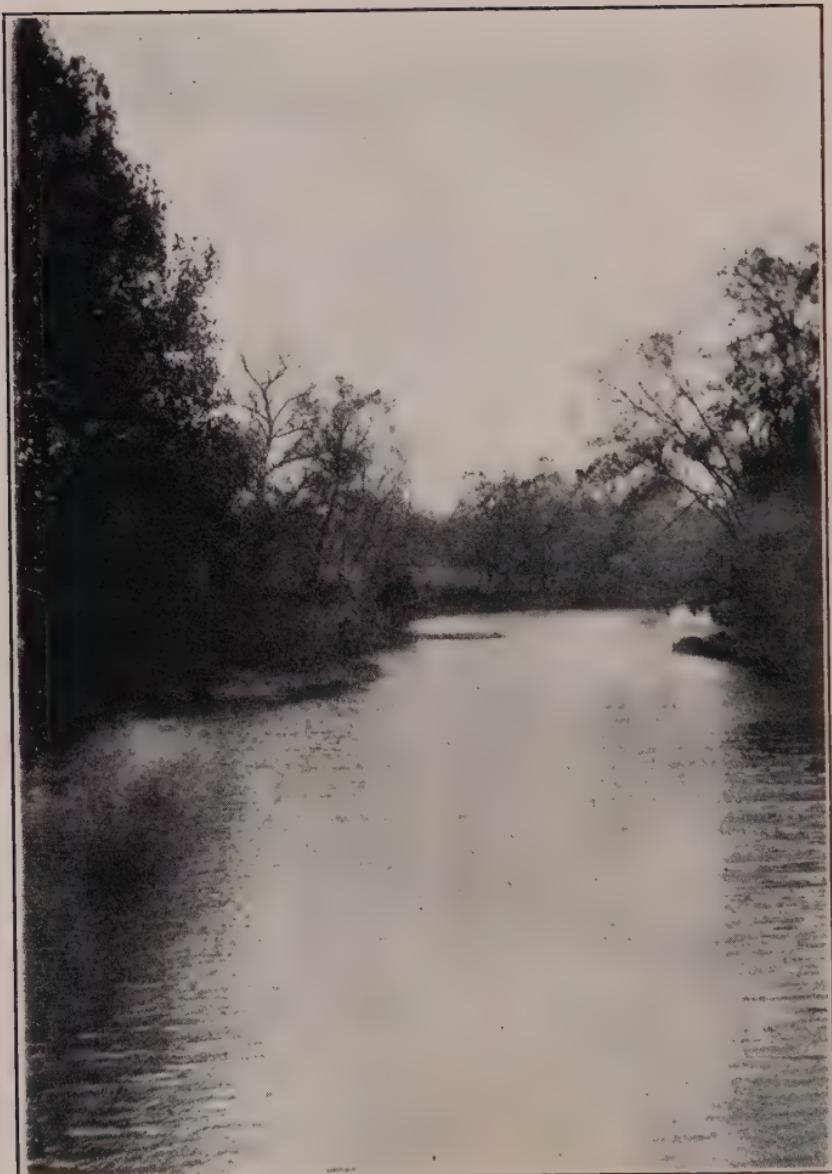
THE LESSON OF THE SPIDER.

There was a spider crawled across my way,
A big, fat, lazy fellow, too, was he,
With gold and yellow stripes as bright as day,
And glaring eyes and horrid jaws so free,
To catch and crush the happy-hearted fly;
"I'll walk upon that ugly thing!" said I.

But yet I did not kill that creature mean,
But went my way and let him wander, too,
And when the morning came with lustrous sheen,
I rambled down that self-same path to view,
The day's bright welcome on the distant hill,
And let God's pure delights my spirit fill!

And then upon the elder bush I saw
A crystal palace builded in mid-air;
With many glistening ropes each part did draw,
And lo, a spider king enthroned was there,
The abject creature that the day before
I thought to tread upon and hated sore!

And then I came to know that very oft
God's giant kings in modest stations start;
Sometimes a genius in a humble loft,
May learn the mighty things of soul and heart,
And with such knowledge in his mighty brain,
Go forth to bless, and bless the world again!



OLD FLAT ROCK RIVER.

OLD FLAT ROCK RIVER.

On the banks of Flat Rock River
Where the willows bend and sway;
Where the green leaves dance and quiver
In the breezes as they play;

Where the muskrat swims and nestles
Under banks so high and steep;
Where the tall crane 'midst the cresses
Wades and fishes "boot-top deep";

Where the dragon-fly so airy
Skims o'er waters still and clear,
Darting like a restless fairy
In and out and there and here!

Oh, 'tis there I love to wander,
With a heart from trouble free—
Sit upon the banks and ponder
'Mong the things I love to see!

Oh, 'tis there to be I'd rather,
In God's simple, little schools—
Learn from folks in fur and feather
How my heavenly Father rules!

Sylvan world where sin can never
Enter and break up the joy;
Where no rebel hearts dissever,
Neither fears of death annoy!

Where no poor folks in their sorrow
Break our hearts with plaintive wail,
Nor bleak shadow of the morrow,
Makes us shudder, makes us quail!

Where no war lights, burning, gleaming,
Lifted by mirage in air,
Make the children, sweetly dreaming,
Waken with their awful glare!

There we learn what heaven may be,
 Such a quiet, soft repose
Hovers o'er these spots so shady
 Where this woodland river flows!

THOMAS HOBBS.

Oh, Thomas Hobbs, oh, Thomas Hobbs,
 So long it's been, I fancy,
Since I have had the cheerful guile
 Of seeing you and Nancy!

Some thirty years I think it is
 Since we were close and chummy,
And I'm a comin' on in years,
 And gittin' old and bummy!

But oh, my Tom, not so with you—
 The years have slipped clean over,
And left you kickin' up your heels
 In youth's sweet-scented clover!

In sooth, I've grown most through my hair,
 My locks no longer cluster
Around my fine and classic brow,
 Old Time to bluff and bluster.

But you, dear Tom, have since renewed
 Your locks o' tawny color,
And grown another head o' hair
 That beats the fust all hollar!

STILL A-TEACHIN' SCHOOL.

(Written on the occasion of seeing, in a copy of an old home paper, an announcement that an old friend had just closed a session of the district school where he had been teaching many years.)

My old friend, Will Clendenning
Is still a-teachin' school;
It's thirty year I reckon,
If I can count by rule,
Since Will stepped on the rostrum,
With stern and mighty looks,
And said: "Come t' order children,
I 'spect it's time for books!"

Ah, many things have come to pass
Since then, my old friend, Will;
You've had some losses in your life
Which time can never fill;
Remember's well as yesterday
Your young and pretty wife,
She passed away while shone above
The morning beams of life!

You've built great castles, William,
You have without a doubt—
Such stately mansions, fame and wealth,
As you should bring about;
I kind o' think—a little bit—
Though maybe you won't own it,
A great man bee once buzzed around,
And hid inside your bonnet!

The closing quarter of the race
Has almost come for you;
Bathed in the rays of setting sun,
The Judge's stand's in view;
But when my mind goes o'er the past,
The tears my sad eyes fill—
God bless ye, Will Clendenning,
And the school ye're teaching still !

And when they beat the muffled drum,
And Will, ye're called to go,
I think the One who knows all things
Will say: " "Tis better so!"
The ones He loves ofttimes He shields
From Fame's temptations wild,
And lets them pass their lives away
As gentle as a child !

LITTLE SLEEPY HEAD.

My dear, little girl was sleepy,
And I called to her o'er and o'er :
"Come, wake up now, my darling,
Don't sleep there any more!"

But she shook her sunny ringlets,
And said with eyes a-peep :
"I'll love oo awsle lots papa,
Iss oo'll on'y le' me s'leep!"

“THE GOLDEN ROAD.”

“The Golden Road”—ah, John, look here,
Ye’re gittin’ rosy now;
Ye make me smile from ear to ear,
An’ then I kind o’ low,
That youth is comin’ back to John,
The sunlit days o’ yore,
When we first started out upon
The way we’ve traveled sore!

An’ yit, I’m rather pleased to note
The Golden’s still in view,
The grouch o’ years, old age’s mote,
Has scarce affected you,
But still ye see things rosy like,
An’ bright tints fill the air
A goin’ down the old-time pike
Where nature’s al’ays fair!

Jist keep along the same old track,
An, John, I’m with ye, too;
Fear not old age’s bluff and rack,
Nur git to feelin’ “blue,”
But plant them trees ‘long “Golden Road,”
An’ let ’em leafy grow,
An’ I’ll come out from mine abode,
An’, then, away we’ll go!

The birds’ll sing that happy day,
Yes, John, they’ll fairly rave;
The flowers’ll bloom beside our way,
Them trees above’ll wave;
Jist crank yer auto, crank it well,
An’ John, we’ll view once more
The sunny spots in field and dell
We loved in days o’ yore!

[Note—The author was inspired to indite the foregoing verses regarding the proposed “Golden Highway” or “Golden Road” by reading the plans promulgated by Mr. John A. Tindall, the

well-known attorney of Shelbyville, whose scheme to plant trees on each side of the old Norristown Pike has been the subject of considerable comment both in the local papers and those elsewhere. This road is ever dear to the memory of the author. He lived along the same from his fifth to fifteenth year, and, boylike, knew every foot of it. Some of his boyhood's happiest associations are staged, if we may so speak, along this old highway.]

PATHRICK'S DRAME.

Pathrick Malony he shlept as an Irishman will,
And begorra, he dreamp't in the nighttime so sh till
That auld Nick came with a smoil soft and wide,
And a pot o' good toddy, 't was Paddy's great pride;

And auld Nick says as he held up the pot;
"Will yees take 'er cauld, Pathrick, or have 'er red hot?"

And Pathrick says he, in his most plazin' way:
"Make 'er hot, auld cloven fut, jist fur to-day!"

Then auld Nick went to the rear of his cell
To heat the red liquor Pat relished so well;

Just then with a start Pat awoke from his schlape,
And 't was only a drame in the nighttime so dape;

And then to his Biddy he whisperin' tauld
"Spaldeen was I then not to take 'er jist cauld!"

OLD MAN SEXTON.

[The evil of intemperance, like that of slavery, had its early opponents. They were men who saw the enormity of the wrongs done long in advance of public sentiment. They were, without exception, hated and maligned. The subject of this sketch was no exception. He was once almost mobbed in a township which now would go overwhelmingly "Dry."]

In lookin' o'er the papers
That come from Shelbyville,
I see that old man Sexton
Is pokin' 'round there still,
An' makin' temprunce lectures
Jist like he used to do
When clods an' clubs was plenty,
An' addled eggs wan't few !

He used to walk to Morristown,
Ur some place jist as far,
An' make a vig'rous lecture
Agin the drinkin' bar,
An' then walk back the self-same night,
Lay stone the foll'wing day,
An' never git a dog-gone cent,
An' not expect no pay !

They called him almost ev'ry name
But gentleman I think;
But still he hammered down their throats
His enmity to drink;
They called him fool, fanatic, crank,
"Old Long Back Sexton," too;
The more they raged an' cussed an' swore,
The firmer still he grew !

He did it 'cause he loved the right,
An' hated e'er the wrong;
No sacerfice was great to him,
To he'p the cause along;
He never made no money,
Nur seemed to keer or know
Which side his bread was buttered on,
In this old world below!

Ah, that was many years ago,
He's more than eighty now;
Each year has left a furrowed mark
Upon that rugged brow;
I cannot tell the fruit he's borne,
When put to time's great test,
But this I can most surely say,
He's done his level best!

He'll never git no pension,
An' like as not, some day,
He'll slip into an unknown grave,
With none to sing his lay; --
No pillared shaft, perhaps, will rise,
To mark that humble spot,
An' mebbe, in a few short years,
The place will be forgot!

But, somehow, I've been thinkin',
When Gabriel's day shall rise,
To call us out o' earth an' sea
To meet our last surprise,
'Longside o' many preachers,
An' salaried preachers, too,
That this old man'll stand up—tall,
Jist like he used to do!

OLD ST. VINCENT.

The summer sunset gilds her spire,
A cross of gleaming gold
Sends forth a burst of yellow fire,
While vesper bell, like chanting friar,
Speaks out in accents bold.

Around the church the buildings stand
Where soft-eyed sisters pray,
In quiet nook, a waiting band
Their sweet petitions there expand,
While speeds the lessening day !

I loved into this church to steal,
Some thirty years ago,
And there before the altar kneel,
Like faithful nun or priest, and feel
The spell those scenes bestow !

And though I am of other fold,
I loved this solemn place;
The pictures there the story told
How Christ had wrought in days of old,
And showed his wondrous grace !

Rapt peacefulness reigns sweetly round
St. Vincent's quiet walls,
When bells have ceased their ling'ring sound,
And prayers are said and beads are wound,
And soft the night-tide falls !

SABBATH AFTERNOON IN FOREST HILL.

Oh, lonesome afternoon—Sabbath afternoon!—
I wander by the monuments which hands of love festoon;
 By new-made graves where withered flowers lie,
 By stately tombs where wealth and grandeur vie;
 The aged husband in the distance there
 Stand o'er a mound and softly breathes a prayer;
And then a mother comes—oh, touching scene!
And sobs above a little grave, in agony most keen.

Oh, quiet afternoon—Sabbath afternoon!—
I ponder what may come to me, may come or late or soon;
 I see my loved ones, too, come trooping here,
 With mournful looks behind a solemn bier;
 In mental view I see them as they stand—
 My own, my blessed, little fam'ly band;
And as the preacher counts my virtues o'er,
They stand and think of happy days now gone forever more!

Oh, silent afternoon—Sabbath afternoon!—
The mighty world has ceased to throb with labor's busy tune;
 It may be near, it may be far away,
 My own loved ones—as these have come today!—
 May stand beside the mound where I shall lie
 With saddened hearts and weeping softly, sigh—
My darlings!—for a swift return of me
In low, sweet tones as those who stand beneath yon drooping tree!

Oh, still, still afternoon—Sabbath afternoon!—
When solemn thoughts come stealing in, for such are opportune;
 Would friends return and come from day to day,
 When spring should smile, with blossoms gay
 And lay them softly down, and slowly, sadly turn—
 As those who stand beside yon flow'ring urn!—
And tell again of precious things I did,
Ere the grave's dark yawning closed its awful lid!

POINTER HILL CEMETERY



Oh, homesick afternoon—Sabbath afternoon!—
All nature resting hushed and still as if in deepest swoon;

Would loved ones think to stop and softly say,
As they betimes would chance to come this way—
As those who stand beside yon pedestal below:
“It broke our hearts when he was called to go!”

For I might closely come and be at hand
With hungry heart and soul to know, and knowing, understand!

* * *

Radiant afternoon—Sabbath afternoon!—

Oh, Christ, thou art the only hope with whom our souls commune!

From thoughts of death that weigh us down with dread,
Thou canst restore us whole and comforted;
“Oh, grave, where is thy vict’ry?” thus we sing;
“And mighty death, where is thy dreaded sting?”

Across these mournful tombs shines perfect day,
“Ye have known me, my precious, trusting one—I am the Way!”

THAT RAT STORY.

Our Friend and Fellow Scribler, Alonzo Leora Rice, of most pleasant and entertaining memory, had a most uncanny experience with a Rat. Indeed, it was a thriller! He went out into the barn, it would seem, "to run a bluff" on some work he had to do there, and became engaged in some sort of a controversy with ye pesky rodent. And the latter, whether attacking or seeking refuge, we know not, with great precipitancy and suddenness, ran up the Bard's pant's leg!!

'Lonzo clutched madly at the creature at the knee "going up," and, again, at the groin, but he slipped behind Mr. Rice's large and plethoric pocketbook, and cavorted around into the lumbar regions, popularly known as "the small of back." Here he "dug in," or it seemed so to the poet, as the Germans might say, and prepared to resist any and all attempts at dislodgment. 'Lonzo made a few desultory and disorganized efforts to dislocate the creature, but found he could reach him neither from above nor below, so he, not the Rat, but the Bard, suddenly became panic-stricken, and with a mad, abandoned yell, true poetic frenzy showing, fled, carrying the enemy and his fortifications with him!! He rushed into the presence of his better half, imploring help in iambic and trochaic polysyllables!!! And when his kind consort had removed all of the garments that concealed, as was supposed, the awful *Mus decumanus* (though that wasn't what 'Lonzo called him, the word he used was fully as severe, however) had absolutely disappeared. The terrible, palpitating yell, the precipitate departure or something had disposed of the rodent. However, the marks were there to show for themselves and a few Male Persons were permitted to make an examination in order to sustain 'Lonzo's previous good reputation for truth and veracity! And the poet says the marks have not left his imagination yet! And, somehow or other, the story got into print, and that aroused the verses to be found on the opposite page.

And yet, Mr. Rice calmly informed the reporter that while this exciting event was happening, he was thinking of what a fine poem he could make of it!

THAT RAT STORY.

'Lonzo, 'Lonzo, come along,
That Rat story's rather strong;

What'd he want up there, now say,
Up your pant's leg just that way?

Scratch his cold claws in your hide,
Crawl around quite satisfied;

Hear you yell and dance around,
Fill the countryside with sound;

Take a spot, 'midst jolt and din,
Spot you couldn't reach him in?

And yet, you jist philosophize
About a poem grand and wise,

Like Bobby Burns wrote 'bout a mouse,
Or may be, more like, 'twas a louse;

Or Homer, 'bout the Golden Shore,
With gods and goddesses galore;

How deities, that distant day
Made love in just the human way;

Or Dante, with his man-made hell—
Turn on the fire and hear 'em yell!

Or Milton, grandly grave and solemn,
And writing po'try by the column;

They all wrote under burdens awful
Such pangs as genius has is woeful!

But not a blamed one, 'Lonzo, true,
Wrote under such a fix as you,

Since you propose and mention pat
To write this story of a Rat!

But I can stand by safe and view it,
And so, you see, I've beat you to it!

THE SNOW BRIGADE.

“The infantry of the snow and the cavalry of the wild blast.”—
—*Ingersoll.*

The dull, gloomy clouds are low-bending,
And laden with moisture the air;
The cornfields rustle their banners,
All tattered and faded and bare;
The woodlands that stood in the glory,
Of russet and purple and gold,
Have lost all their beautiful trappings,
And shiver and toss in the cold!

On the crest of the gath’ring storm cloud
A wonderful army is there,
Like that which the old prophet witnessed
Up-filling the ranks of the air—
Soldiers in spotless-white armor,
With crystalline swords on the thigh;
Vast, surging battalions of warriors,
To wage us a strife from on high!

They make up the order of battle
For assault on the folk here below,
And my cheeks grow red with the prospect
Of repelling this silver-clad foe;
I dread not the furious onslaught,
Nor the wound of the lily-white blade,
For the rich, warm blood of the life-tide,
Has rendered my soul unafraid!

There are some in the grave lot yonder,
Who are not so favored as I,
But must lie cold and still and silent,
While the snow builds his breast works high;
And there will they lie as if conquered,
As if vanquished both dragoon and horse,
While the winds shout their wild rejoicings
In accents both high-pitched and coarse!

Some day in the beautiful future,
When the snows are all melted and gone
And the fetters of death are all broken,
There will come then a radiant dawn,
And these in their lowly beds lying
Will arise in garments as white,
As the crystalline flakes that are flying,
And piling up soft and light!

THE KINDS O' LOVE.

A man kin love his neighbor,
He kin love him purty good;
He kin love him fur his pile of coal,
And fur his kindlin' wood

He kin love him for the "saw buck"
That the man is like to lend;
He kin love him fur the pile o' "dough"
The man is shore to spend.

He kin love him fur the dinner
That is steamin' on his board,
He kin love him fur the bank account,
Fur many years the hoard!

But to love him fur his inner self,
To he'p the chap along,
That kind o' love is mos'ly found
In po'try and in song!

OLD FREEPORT.

Old Freeport stands anent the tide,
The classic tide o' Blue;
But you should see the town itself,
And then you'd chuckle, too !

I went to see the houses, but
They ain't no houses there;
I went to see the castle, but
They're "Castles in the Air!"

The town has quite a memory
That goes back before the war,
Of noble sons and daring sires
And deeds they don't abhor !

They tell me, too, there's many a name
That's carved on fame's bright wall,
That erst was cut in school house bench
Where Freeport shadows fall !

They tell about a doctor and
A lawyer known to fame,
And a man o' great invention,
But I jist forgit his name !

I don't sneer much at Freeport, though
In size she's made no gains,
For she's had a kind o' harvest, sir,
A harvest rich in brains !

THE GOLDEN ROD.

The Golden Rod, the Golden Rod,
A growin' down the lane,
It takes me back fur forty years,
An' I'm a boy again;
I smell the yaller apples
'At in the orchard growed,
I hear the rustle of the corn
'At stood beside the road !

The Golden Rod, the Golden Rod,
A bowin' mild and meek
In the soft, September breezes
'At fan my furried cheek;
I see the smoky atmosphere
'At wraps the distant hill,
And Bob White's whistle in the field
Is soundin' loud and shrill !

The Golden Rod, the Golden Rod,
It toiled from spring to fall,
A standin' 'mong the dusty weeds,
It peared no 'count a tall;
But pashently it pegged along,
An' done the best it could,
Till Jack Frost came with toothsome lip,
An' kissed the field and wood !

The Golden Rod, the Golden Rod,
When soft-eyed russet days
Began to peek about the earth
In Injun Summer haze,
'Twas then the Lord o' Harvest came
A smilin' o'er the wold,
And He's bestowed on Golden Rod
Her crown o' yaller gold !

The Golden Rod, the Golden Rod,
 This lesson teaches man:
Don't be too quick to cuss your luck,
 But do the best you can,
And by and by your pashence
 Will receive its rich reward,
Fur a crown o' golden glory
 Will be given by the Lord!

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT BUG.

Mr. They Say, a particular friend of the author—possibly you know him?—informs me that there is a large, scavenger, water beetle, which has also the capacity of living on land, and, being provided with wings, is able to fly. Before the advent of the electric light, this creature was so infrequently found, that it was rarely ever noted by scientists. Since the establishment of our present systems of lighting for towns and villages the insect has become so abundant that it has received the name of the "Electric Light Bug."

Mr. T. S. further informs me that this brilliant illumination has such a weird fascination for the beetle that as soon as it begins to gleam through the darkness, Sir E. L. Bug leaves his native habitat, the pond, climbs up the stem of a sweet flag, and stretching his uncouth wings, sets sail for the wonderful attraction at once.

This beautiful story has not as yet received the scientific approval. The author sent a sketch of it to the *Scientific American*, and the article was returned with simply a ? after it. Now, that doesn't say it isn't true, does it? At any rate it is so delightful to put a little poetical inspiration into a poor bug's head, that I prefer to use it!

Since writing the above, the author has found at least one competent scientist, Prof. D. A. Owen, of Franklin, who corroborates the scientific accuracy of the statements given.

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT BUG.

There's an insect that lives in the water,
 But dwells quite as well on the land,
Where he spreads his dull wings in the evening
 If the breezes blow softly and bland.

And this creature—how strange is his story!—
 In his dank and forbidding abode,
Like a People who sat in great darkness
 On whom was a shining bestowed,

Beholds through the gloom of the night-tide,
 Gleaming far through the water and air,
The shimmering lights of the city
 A vision to him wonderously fair,

And straightway, he lays down his burdens,
 Forgets he the cares of the day,
And turning his back on his old scenes,
 He, spreading his wings, flies away!

And lo, when the night has passed over,
 And this mystical light has all flown,
The misguided bug lies before me,
 A-wounded and helpless and lone!

Most strange and queer-looking creature,
 With head so misshapen and odd,
Can it be that thou hast a conception
 Of this puzzlesome world and its God?

And did this the light of fair science,
 To thy dull comprehension convey
A message that stirred up ambition,
 And bade thee make haste and away?

Hast thou some judgment to culture,
 A soul we may struggle to save;
Has thou e'en a perception of sorrow,
 Or a dread and a fear of the grave?

Thou hast none, and yet, when the message
Came shining so clear and so bright,
How quickly its call thou didst answer,
And hustled thee forth in the night!

No thought didst thou have of the danger,
But came with a zeal brave and strong;
How many the sons of the human
Like thee rush to hurting and wrong!

And when their life chance has passed over,
And they lie crushed and hurt on the street,
How vainly they strive and they struggle,
To make yet their life work complete!

But lo, though by sin crushed and ruined,
The Prodigal's chance we still share,
We may steal back home to our father,
Where there's food and plenty to spare!

MY DAY OF REST.

On shore of rustic, woodland lake—
My simple dog, he standeth by—
I call till echoes loud awake
The wide, long range of wood and sky !

I have sweet dreams of simple life—
That listless cur now slumbers by ;
I seem to pass from care and strife
And lose me in the stillness nigh !

My mind is full of fancies rare,
And e'er my dog rests softly by ;
I hear strange tones in wood and air,
I see weird sights in wave and sky !

And when at last has come the eve,
And Sol has set behind the trees,
I turn the quiet spot to leave
Wherein I sought a day of ease !

And find in fact, that of the twain,
Myself and dog, this simple test,
That I'm fatigued and feel the strain,
The dog it was that got to rest !

And could I lie but in the shade,
And sleep as life's bright shadows wane,
Forget the world and life and trade,
I then might slip Care's cable chain !

But, never, no ; it cannot be,
Since God this active mind has given,
I cannot from my burdens flee,
Till I have reached the mole of heaven !

THE FIRST SCHOOL DAY.

Going to school! Yes, my darling,
Today is the first day for you,
And I see the last of my baby,
And a young miss cometh to view!

We were so happy together,
Just the wee, little tot and I,
Two of the jolliest comrades
It was ever my lot to spy!

But old Time saw I was happy,
Just as happy as mortal could be,
So he puckered up disgruntled,
And went about envying me!

He's trying to take my darling,
And my heart groweth strange and chill;
The highest place in the future
May be set for sweetheart to fill.

But my old heart aches for baby,
Just my wee, little tot of yore,
And I wish in my soul I could travel
The days of her babyhood o'er!

And I think of the day that's coming,
When baby a fledgling no more,
Will fly away from the home nest,
Me standing alone in the door!

Oh, Father, when that time cometh,
If there's just a chariot at hand,
Please send down here and take me,
Away from earth's lonesome old strand!

THE FIRST TEMPTATION.

'Twas the other day, my darling,
 A lassie aged four,
Tossed upward the sofa cushion
 And knocked the lamp shade o'er.

Her mamma had often told her
 To cease her reckless play,
But the little, wayward maiden
 Had neglected to obey.

And on the floor before her,
 The shade in fragments broke,
The little, frightened girlie,
 With anguish her ma bespoke:

"Oh, mamma!" she cried, "dear mamma,"
 With tears in her troubled eyes,
"P'ease, may I ast oo a favver?"
 Her mamma heard in surprise:

"When papa comes dis evenin',
 Don't tell what Jeanie did,
But dess say a cat b'oke the lamp shade,
 As she jumped around and hid!"

"Oh, Jeanie, my precious darling,
 You know it would be untrue,
To say it was poor, little kitty,
 Who broke the shade, not you!"

That night when I reached my dwelling,
 No little sweetheart came,
With her chubby arms around me,
 And her cheeks with welcome aflame!

I called aloud and still louder,
 Till from her hiding place,
My poor, little tempted baby
 Came forth with a burning face!

And when I looked in those soft eyes
That showed me her honest mind,
I saw she was fighting a battle
With the tempter of all mankind!

At last she crept out and beside me,
Her eyes still moistened with tears,
"Does oo sink oo'll still be my papa,
Spite o' ev'rysing oo hears?"

And my kiss was the ready answer,
As I folded her to my breast,
And I heeded my precious loved one,
As she softly her wrong confessed:

"Oh, papa!" she said, "p'ease fordive me,
The lamp-shade it was I who b'oke,
And when I p'ten'ded 'twas kitty,
I dess meanted it for a joke!"

LAUGHED AT ME.

I wrote a verse in playful mood
To make the sad world laugh;
I cannot say 't was bad or good,
Or sense or silly chaff;
The world refused with laugh or smile,
My humble wit to see,
But turned around with playful guile,
And stood and laughed at me!



"SAINTS' REST", FAIRLAND, INDIANA.

SAINT'S REST ON BRANDYWINE.

The little village of Fairland nestles in an artificial valley; for when you approach it from the east, your traction car climbs a tall hill built by man over the New York Central Lines, and you gaze down upon its quiet and home-like domain. It was once a place that sported a "doggery" or two, and then there was some immorality and law-breaking, and then it was that some ingenious wit gave the village the name of Saint's Rest, and the sobriquet has stuck. The wit, some say, was our old friend, T. B. Carey, and it's very much like him. Since this whilom christening, the good people have made a united effort and got rid of the "doggeries" and it has become a place "made of all sweet accord." The now classical Brandywine runs hard by this village.

SAINT'S REST ON BRANDYWINE.

I wandered down the valley
From the lofty traction height,
And gazed around the prim, old town
With spirits clear and bright;
But one thing struck me, neighbor,
As being rare and fine:
I've heard of Saints on manna fed,
But not on Brandywine!

I gazed into their tidy shops,
I shook their hearty hands;
I walked along their quiet streets,
And met their children's bands;
But one thing still impressed me:
How by all the powers divine,
They could bring about such jolly saints,
The Saints on—Brandywine!

They're great on education—
Have many churches, too;
And all the people round about
You've got to class "true blue;"
But yet I'm still debating—
The thing I can't define—
Is how they could evolve such saints,
The Saints—on Brandywine!

I scratched my head and rubbed my nose,
And scratched and rubbed again,
And then at last I gave it up,
The problem's 'yond my ken;
And can you tell me, reader, dear,
Who scans my feeble line,
Howe'er they could produce such saints,
The Saints on Brandywine!

THE POETS.

When the mother of the Muses
Traveled east to Johnson's line,
Naught she heard but praise of Douglas
They were singing good and fine.

When she crossed the county border,
Standing then at Shelby's door,
She could only hear of 'Lonzo,
It was "Doug" not any more!

THE SINGING OF THE OLD SONG.

My dear, little girl in the evening
Climbs to her place on my knee,
And says to me softly: "Oh, papa,
Will 'oo sing 'Nellie Gray' to me?"

Then I think of the days departed,
The first time I heard the old song,
I sat on the knee of my father,
A little chap, sturdy and strong.

And he, in the full prime of manhood,
With resonant voice strong and clear,
Sang the words of the old-time ballad,
His voice and his tone I yet hear.

I've heard since the music of masters
Where gathered the worshipful throng,
But naught was to me e'er so lovely
As was then that simple, old song.

He sang with no voice of rare culture,
Scant knowledge of music had he,
But then he was greatest of all men,
And sweetest of singers—to me!

Long, long has my dear father slumbered
'Neath the grass-covered mound on the hill,
And yet, from a silence unbroken,
He speaks and he sings to me still.

And oftentimes when quiet enfolds me,
I could hear a pin strike the floor,
I can see him and hear him yet singing,
As he sang in the days of the yore!

And I sing with the tear-drops soft flowing—
It is dusk and sweetheart can't see,
And I trust when she sings to her children
She will tenderly think then of me!

OLD YOUNG'S CRICK.

They ain't no romance 'bout it—
Old Young's Crick's w'at I mean—
It goes meanderin' onward
Its grassy banks between.

No mountains and no cascades,
Nor caves whur robbers hide;
No awful roarin' rapids
With waters foamin' wide!

No deep holes whur the soundin' line
Gits lost from tech and sight,
And ye couldn't hear it rattle
On the rocky bottom white!

No mighty, ragin' battles
Ever fit along its banks,
No "vomitin'" o' cannon,
"Mowin' down the serried ranks!"

No fishes that air hard to ketch,
But they'll do to lie about,
And describe the awful tussle
That it took to pull 'em out!

But by Gum! some how or other,
I love to wander down
Among the old crick bottoms
That lie jist west o' town!

Can't ketch no fish or nothin',
Jist pretend to go fur that,
Though they's now and then a sunfish,
And once 'n a while a cat.

But ef fishin' is fur lazy men,
And that's jist what they say,
Old Young's Crick's got the hull bunch skinned
Most any summer's day.

And I jist like to lie around,
And kind o' think and dream,
As lazy as the water still
In this old lazy stream !

GOD WEAVES THE CROWN.

Out of the struggle and toil of the day,
Come write me a poem as sweet as the May,
Soothing my wounded soul,
Hurt in the fray !

For I have been shaken without and within,
Foiled and tormented and tempted by sin,
Ambitions all baffled
And thrown down again !

I know there's a Father with tenderness keen
Who sees the true heart when by man 'tis not seen,
Still saddened are we
When failures subvene !

And I come home at night with a brow overcast,
And I fear that my life work may fail me at last,
Such a palpable gloom
When daylight is passed !

But the poem is written, and this is its song :
"Out of this torment, this struggle with wrong,
God weaves the fair crown
That to you shall belong!"

A SUMMER DAY'S REVERIE.

This peaceful summer day I hail with glee;
The heat across the field ascends in waving line;
I lay me down beneath the shady tree,
And upward idly gaze through green mosaics fine!

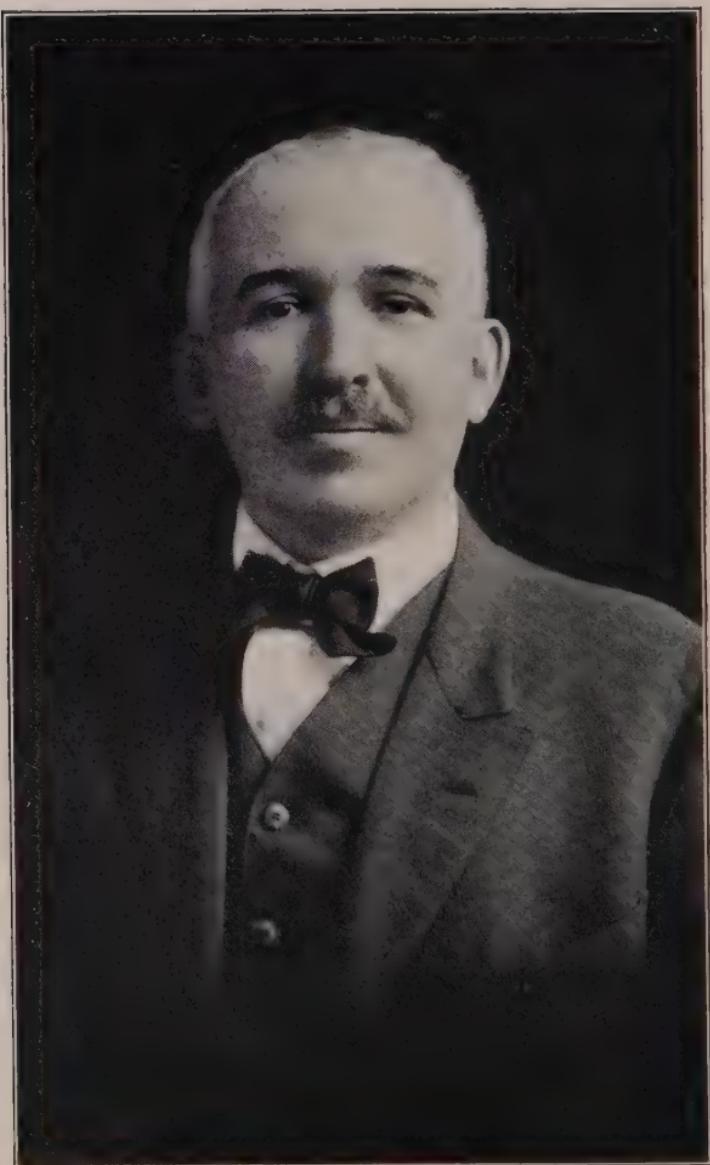
Far, far away, in heaven's azure sea,
I notice, passing high above, a fleecy cloud;
So far it sails above the earth and me,
So pure it seems to be, and yet, withal, so proud!

Of this soiled earth am I, and that I know;
This sun-illumined cloud was born of heaven's blue;
Ofttimes, I've longed to leave my sphere below,
And, like this airy cloud, pass forth to greater view!

And yet, I cannot say such course would suit
This somewhat humble mold wherein my soul was cast;
Fame's quest is grand and high, none may dispute,
But is there worthy boon in such a field so vast?

Nay, rather let me be an humble bard,
And sing some touching, little song at close of day,
Than seek a realm for lesser minds too hard,
Or enter lists wherein the grand, old masters sway!

At least, I may so run this earthly race,
Like wearied steed, the home-stretch drawing nigh,
May be prepared, the Judge's stand to face,
And hear His sweet endorsement—as I die!



JOHN DAY DE PREZ.

JOHN'S PICTURE.

Just looked at Johnny's picture
In the paper coming here;
Same old John, it is, by Golly,
With a smile from ear to ear;
'Tis thirty years I reckon,
Since Johny came to school;
He wasn't a fiend for study,
And yet, was nobody's fool

And now they've made him a trustee,
A kind of a city dad,
To set up a splendid pattern
To the children good and bad.
I've a notion to "give him away,"
And tell about how he did,
In the old times thirty years ago,
When Johnny was just a "kid."

Would he be good? Nay, verily,
That's the best that I can say;
And keep real still? Oh, gracious,
He was builded "nit" that way!
But consarn the boy, I liked him,
He was always neat and clean,
And with all this tarnal mischief,
He wasn't a blamed bit mean!

He'd laugh, of course, he'd do that,
But cut him never so keen,
He'd never get cross nor sassy,
Nor spit out any spleen,
Nor try to ruin his teacher
With action hidden or wrong,
Nor stir up the other children
To help their meanness along!

And this I've always got to say,
As my mind goes running o'er
The many, many happenings
Of the old years gone before:
When I think of Johnny Deprez,
And the many things he did,
In spite of all his mischief,
He was an agreeable "kid"!

KICKED TO DEATH BY A SHEEP.

Once was a man whose name I just can't keep,
Was kicked unto his death by vicious sheep;
And there upon his bed, poor man, he lay,
His life just slipping sure and fast away,
Was seen to weep and wipe his glassy eyes!
His good wife now comes running up and cries:

"Oh, husband, dear, what makes you take on so?
Your woeful grief just fills my soul with woe!"

The man then says and heaves a bitter sigh:

"Oh, wife, it ain't that I'm afeared to die,
That makes me wipe mine eyes and sadly weep,
It's to be kicked to death by that old sheep!"

THE TREE-FROG EXAMPLE.

(These lines were written in reply to some verses written by Harold Knox Morris and read by him at a banquet of the Shelbyville High School Alumni.)

My dear H. K., I'm sorry that,
I've got the "bob-tailed flush" so pat,
That ev'ry time I'd draw a spade
The queen of clubs appears—the jade!
For twenty years I've sat and toyed,
And drawn my cards—heart overjoyed.
But when I did my hand survey,
'T would be "bob-tailed"—no other way!

I've hammered like an Ajax strong;
I've hollered down the rain bar'l long;
And yet I must confess in truth,
I've failed to write in age or youth,
As well as Charlie sitting there
Who wrote the Knighthood fancies rare!

"There's many poets who've never penned,"
So Byron wrote—he must have kenned,
The best they had within their pates—
Perhaps, that fact to me relates.
At any rate, I must concede,
I've not grown great with startling speed!

And yet, like Riley's Tree Frog bold—
You've heard how well the story's told—
That hollered morns and noons and eves,
And then at night rolled up his sleeves,
Spit on his hands—I may so speak!—
And hollered through the long night bleak!

And then a voice, as if in pain:
"If you'll jist hush, why, then I'll rain!"
And like the frog, dear Harold K.,
I'll holler, holler night and day,
And fair Success, to save the din,
Will have to crown me winner then!

THE REFORMERS.

Reformers were we in the old, old days,
Charlie and Will and I,
And we strove for the Right as we saw it
With a purpose grand and high.

And we lived and we labored together
In God's rare, old vineyard place,
Happy and busy forever were we,
As our lives ran on apace.

But the hand of a heavier burden
Fell alone on humble me,
And I like the prodigal son of old
Left home so happy and free.

And I wandered out among strangers
In other and unknown land,
And I found there who scarcely would know me,
And none who would understand.

On the anvil of fate God placed poor me,
And his blows came sturdy and strong,
Until into shape was my poor soul wrought,
Though the process lasted long !

And I learned ev'ry lesson of sorrow,
I learned all there was in scorn,
And I learned what it was to be doubted
All the noon-tide, night and morn !

But I learned that this earth-life is hollow,
I learned that its trust is untrue,
And the source of all honor and sweetness,
My Savior I found in lieu !

And yet, we are ever reformers—
Charlie and I and Will ;
Their pathway has led them through pleasant fields,
But mine over mountain and hill.

But the sad world e'er heedeth my message,
For it comes from a burdened heart,
That in the harsh school of disaster
Has been driven to play its part!

Am I greater than they? Well, hardly,
But if so then this is the way:
God sent me to toil on a rougher road,
With heavier loads than they!

OH, LONNIE L. RICE.

Oh, Lonnie Rice, oh, Lonnie Rice,
Your fealty, say, is it warm?
One time you will speak in your rhyming device,
And language real quaint and awfully nice,
Of your home on a New Hampshire farm.

And then again with a rumbling roar,
And music away down your throat,
Your fondly the scenes of your boyhood explore,
You will ponder and think on old Little Blue's shore.
And will much on old Hoosierdom dote!

Now which, my dear 'Lonzo, explain it to me,
The place you'd prefer to be born at;
Is Hampshire the place where you wish it would be,
Or the state of Old Shelby, light hearted and free,
This simple request, don't you scorn at!

POPULARITY.

Would I be popular? Yes, my friend,
But I never expect to be,
As long as the truth needs assistance
From the ranks of men like me.

Nor as long as my God's plain teaching
Needs a resolute heart and hand,
And great evils constrain resistance
With such forces as I command.

For as long as my God can use me
With a token of tongue or of pen,
I must carry his message onward
To the falter'ring race of men!

And as long as the truth plainly spoken
Must shatter the strong tower of wrong,
Though tremblingly bear I the message,
I must speak it bravely and strong!

There's no malice in this my action,
No venom as bitter as gall;
No purpose to wound for the wounding,
To strike that mere foes may fall!

Just love, and my Father's high planning
To succor while life shall last;
To do all the good I am able
In this struggle hard and fast!

Perhaps when I tell you this story,
And you peer down into my heart
As into a fountain pellucid,
You'll forgive me the words that smart!

THE STAR SHOWER.

Clarence Bruce one night says he:
"Major, come and go with me;

"Collum, you may come along,
I'm not going to do you wrong!"

'Twas a night in early fall,
Long ago as I recall;

Tice had said though not quite right,
Stars would fall that very night;

So these three with fun intent,
Out into the darkness went.

Last they came with whispers shrill,
Right beneath my window sill;

Here they talked in gutt'ral tones,
Sent a shiver through my bones.

"Hey, there. Dobby, wake up now.
Soon there'll be an awful row;

Mighty racket in the sky,
Stars and meteors soon will fly!

And if we may apprehend,
Soon the world will have an end!"

I got up with fearful start,
Those drear words disturbed my heart;

Jumped into my pants and vest,
Hustled forth on midnight quest;

Found the three, my chums at school,
Huddled round a little pool.

It had rained that self same day,
But the clouds had cleared away.

“What ye doin’, boys?” I asked
When I joined them at their task.

“Stars air goin’ to fall!” says they,
“Wet yer cap [they showed] this way !

Or the stars with heat so red,
Will singe the hair from off yer head !”

I’d got a brand new cap that day,
A fine silk plush, all neat and gay.

This the rogues knew very well,
For that day they’d heard me tell

Where I’d got it, what I paid,
All about the way ’twas made—

Chums know all such trifling facts,
And the way each boy friend acts.

And then I was but scarce awake,
With excitement all a-quake.

Never stopped to think a bit
Of the awkward phase of it.

“Men,” they said, “up in the town,
Think the stars air comin’ down;

Pourin’ water on each roof,
Makes a feller stand aloof;

People who air wise as you,
Think the stars will burn clean through;

Scorch the folks all sleeping snug,
Sprinkle sparkles on the rug,

Smolder in the dinin' room,
'Spplode the coal oil with a boom!"

And then they stopped and rubbed each hat,
As if their safety needed that,

And in the pool would dip a paw,
At least, that's what I thought I saw!

Gosh! my eyes stood out as big
As a ripe, full-rounded fig!

Just then, like a verdant fool,
Down I knelt beside the pool,

Soused therein my fine silk plush,
Then there was a moment's hush,

Next there came a yell—all three—
Cause they had the joke on me,
Plain enough as you can see!

THE OLD BIRTH PLACE.

Your old home where you're born and raised,
Is like your old home speech;
You never grow so learned and wise
To get beyond its reach.

You never walk down science's paths,
In business life or mart,
But that in mind the old scenes come,
And hover 'round your heart.

You cannot climb fame's wall so high,
Where praise like thunders peal,
But still into your flattered ear
These old home sounds will steal!

And e'en upon his dying couch
The wanderer's mind is turned
Back, back again to early scenes
Where childhood's altars burned!

The man who would forget his youth,
Forget life's pleasant morn,
Forget the dear, old pleasant scenes,
The place where he was born.

E'en for an emperor's sway and power,
E'en for the name of king,
Is counterfeit within his soul
And cannot truly ring!

TO JIM.

I see your picture's in the paper,
Jim, it looks like you,
Time you pounded Albert Dakers
With a billiard cue.

Long has been the journey, Jimmie,
Down the river, Time,
And I see it all so clearly,
I set it down in rhyme!

You were young then, Jim, and I, too;
Both are oldish now;
But by Gum, I still feel hearty,
I'd rather like a row.

Down at Hendricks township school house,
Place they called "Ben-Gall;"
I can see the boys from Shelby,
Hear them shout and call!

'P'int the jedges, make the speeches;
Jim, I've got your fit,
Subject: "Chinese Immigration,"
Guess we'll argue it!

Can't you see the old boys trooping,
Coming down the row,
And the pretty girls we loved so—
Thirty years ago!

Ah, they come again in mem'ry,
Jist to hear us "spout,"
B'lieved we both be president-ez
'F ever we'd come out!

Those were blessed day dreams, Jimmie,
That never came to pass,
Both our barques of greatness stranded,
On the sandbar grass.

But I love to think how some folks—
Though 't was long ago,
Thought we were so great and splendid,
And admired us so!

HARRY RAY, J. P.

There's Harry Ray, my old friend, Harry,
I've known him long ago;
"In fair, round belly?" Yes, I grant it,
The fact is plain you know.

And, doubtless, oft with capon lined,
As in the Shakespeare verses,
With learned saws and instances,
He's apt to fill discourses!

The picture was a perfect one,
With just one detail wanting;
He was no magistrate, you see,
No J. P. bold and flaunting!

You've heard about the fitness
Eternal found in things;
I think it is John Wesley
Who such a purpose sings.

And so at last it's recognized
In Harry's case as well;
They've made him now a justice,
That's all I've got to tell!

MEMORIES.

Suggested when revisiting Forest Hill Cemetery, Sunday, May 30, 1915, after an absence of more than twenty years.

Last Sabbath I walked down the highways
And streets of my native town;
Two long decades since have flitted
Its alleys and by-ways adown.

In my ramble this early morning
With the freshness and breath of the dew;
I went with the throngs to the suburbs
Where they scattered the flowers anew.

I saw them, the sorrowing people,
As they came to the burial ground,
With flowers and garlands in number
And I knew in each heart was a wound!

And I thought of the days long departed,
When I walked down these streets heretofore,
How many I then gladly greeted
Have passed to the echoless shore!

And it seemed that the old days reverted,
And the throngs now lying so still,
Came forth from their dark, narrow chambers
With motion and living a-thrill!

The laughter I heard in my boyhood,
The songs that were dear to my soul,
Came blessing the hours of the morning
As its moments began to unroll!

There were sorrows so long since forgotten,
That returned with their sting and their pain;
There were wasted ambitions and longings,
That came crowding in memory's train!

How precious, oh, God, can I measure,
Though they came with a pain and a smart,
Where these delicate wraiths of the bye-gones
That came surging back into my heart!

Yet I said: Though they come and they taunt me
Till the tears fall in generous rain,
I shall welcome, yes, kindly bid welcome
These forms and these faces again!

Though quickly they rise and they vanish,
Like a phantom but dimly revealed;
Though they bring back a pang and a sorrow,
And show me a wound partly healed!

THE SOUL'S COMPLEMENT.

The day is a poem of lightness
Shining forth from a radiant sky;
God's beacon of splendor and brightness
Floods woodland and field from on high.

My life has become all of sweetness,
Though the past has been checkered and mean;
God's truth and his wondrous completeness
Have filled all the spaces between.

Like a cloud on a bright summer's morning,
Showing dull-faced and stupid and cold,
But the sun coming up at the dawning,
And then 'tis all glory and gold!

THE RADIANT MOON.

The radiant moon, the radiant moon
From out the eastern sky,
With gen'rous light to earth a boon,
She sails serenely high.

The magic of these moonbeams bright,
Oh, how can I explain,
When bathed in her resplendent light,
My youth comes back again.

Again I'm in those halcyon days,
The days of long ago,
When I walked down life's pleasant ways,
A careless, happy beau.

Beside that bright and winsome lass
In fair, old Shelbyville;
Such joyous hours, why should they pass,
Forget, I never will!

I cannot tell why 't should be so—
She's sweet and good and true;
Her hair's but slightly tinged with snow,
Still bright her eyes of blue.

But when the moon comes beaming bright
From out the eastern sky,
These youthful mem'ries streaming light,
Time's flood-gates open high.

And wife who sits beside me here,
Dear patient, faithful one,
Becomes once more the lassie dear,
I wooed in days agone!

Your magic power, oh, Moon's soft beams,
Like smile from Throne above,
Can bring again fair June's sweet dreams
When first I learned to love!

THE AMBITIONS OF CHILDHOOD.

There are scenes in dear old Shelby
That come up before mine eyes,

There are faces, too, that never fade away;
Whate'er I do, where e'er I go,
These forms before me rise

As I saw them once in childhood's happy day!

One scene I now recall to mind,
'Twas many years ago,

My mother sitting by me I can see;
She read to me from old-time book,

A reader So and So,

A story that comes plainly back to me!

The time she did the reading,
I never shall forget,

'Twas in the pleasant springtime o' the year;
I can hear the birds a-singing,
And the sun is shining yet,

As the scene comes up before me bright and clear!

She read about some little boys—

What they were going to be,

When they should chance to grow up into men;
And their little, vain ambitions
So enthralled and captured me,

I never shall lose sight of them again!

I then and there resolved, oh, dear!

What I should some day do,

The thrilling plans I'd work for God and man;
How the world should laugh for very joy,
Be happy through and through,

Just because I'd lived and wrought a little span!

Now my wearied hands are empty,
And my course is well-nigh o'er,
And the noble things I meant to do—undone!
But 'tis sweet when springtime cometh,
To be soft of heart once more,
And to dream again of vict'ries never won!

And yet, I sometimes think, perchance,
God's purpose is fulfilled—
My castles are in ruins, be it true—
But he sees my calloused fingers
And He knows how hard I've willed
To do the thinks I'd fondly hoped to do!

And though the thrilling, mighty deeds
I meant to do one day
Must ever in this world be left undone,
Yet, perchance, a bit of humble verse,
A simple, heartfelt lay,
May please my Father better far than none!

THOMAS F. CHAFFEE.

They talk about loyalty, Tom, dear Tom,
And what it all means to be true;
And I try to picture it all in my mind,
And wind up by thinking of you!

SILVAN B. MORRIS.

The veteran "Merchant Prince" of Shelbyville, who recently retired from active affairs.

O, master of finance,
The builder up of business vast and great;
The pioneer of an industry
That has spread like ocean wave,
From its center far and wide!

In times long since agone,
When storms of doubt and crushing panic came.
And fell with blighting force on other men,
Like a stout door with panels firm,
And solid, oaken frame,
You well withstood the shock!

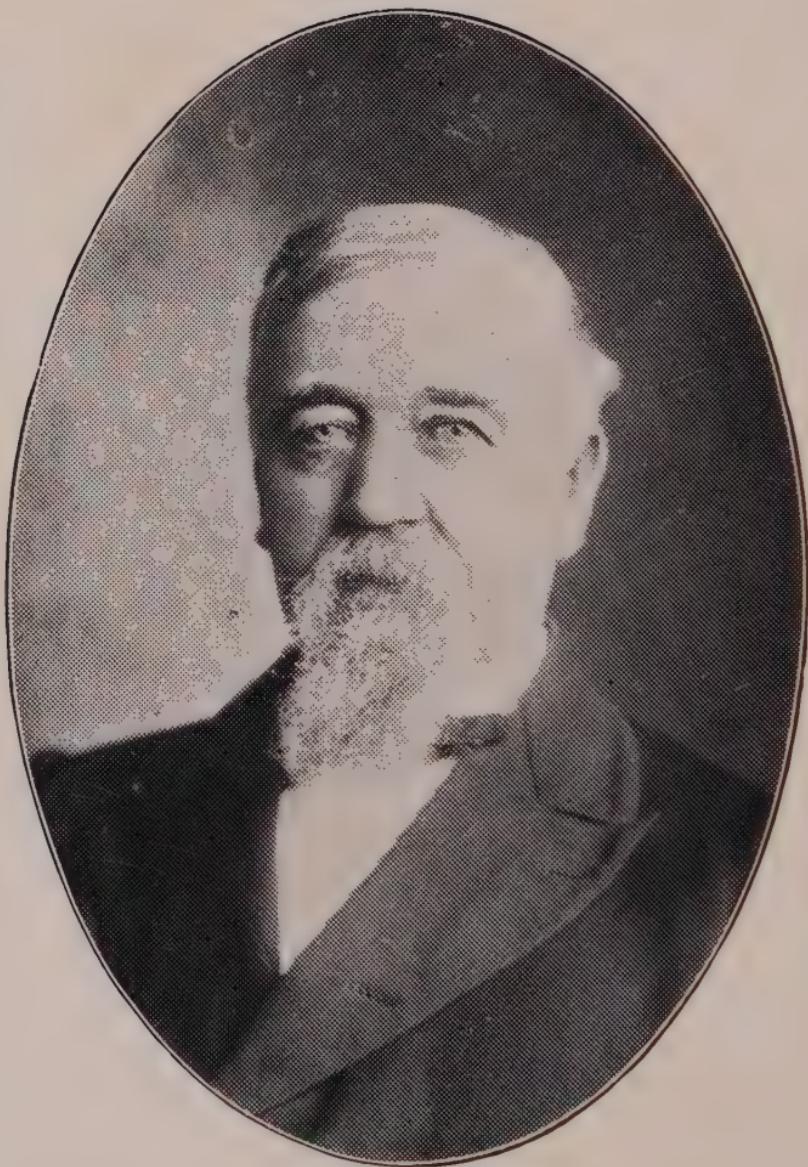
And many lesser men have clung
To you in raging, seething flood,
And felt the influence of your calm, clear mind;
For they have seen you right yourself,
Like a ship, wind-smitten and wave battered,
And still withstand the shock of wave on wave!

'And now shall not this thing be sweetly said?

"In the gentle evening of a prime old age,
With honors, wealth and noble battles won,
You shall calmly sit beneath your vine and fig,
And fearlessly enjoy your well-earned wage,
And in memory review the worthy past!"

And as Goldsmith said:

To husband our life's taper at its close,
And learn the luxury of rest—repose!



JOHN J. WINGATE.

MY SHIPS AT SEA.

I have ships that went to sea
In the days of infancy;
On the booming ocean wide,
Still, perhaps, the waves they ride;
Long ago, my hopes were lost
In these vessels, tempest tossed!

Other ships have I that weighed
Anchor when my boyhood stayed;
Gone are they from sight and ken,
Ne'er, may be, to come again;
Lost upon the trackless deep
Where the ocean's tempests sweep!

Then in later, saner years
Ships I launched in doubts and fears;
Better, more sea-worthy craft
Out I sent where wild waves laughed;
From a far-off, distant scope,
Tidings come that bid me hope!

And I sometimes laugh and say.
"What if on some sunny day,
All my ships of youth or age
Should within my harbor rage
Rage and chafe against the quay,
What would all that mean to me?

"They'd bring me wives I dare not own,
And not my faithful one dethrone;
They'd bring me lives I could not live,
And pray that God such lives forgive;
A pirate king I wished to be
In days of youth so wild and free!"

And now it is my trust and prayer
That God will keep somehow, somewhere,
Above the waves that toss and roar,
And let them make the homeward shore,
These later ships I sent away—
For other ships, I do not pray!

THE PRINTER EMERITUS.

John J. Wingate, who recently celebrated his seventy-seventh birthday anniversary, may well be styled "The Printer Emeritus of Shelbyville." He has been connected with the papers of "Old Shelby" since the time "Whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." This can be truly said of John J. Wingate in all of his dealings with the people around him: "He always 'wobbled' right!"

Dear John, old friend, I've known you well
For forty years or more,
And I'm a hoping pretty strong
You'll get another score;
Your hair *is* white; but darn it, John,
The hair is just a part;
And I'm as sure as man can be,
That younger grows the heart.



WILLIAM C. MORRISON.

WILLIAM C. MORRISON.

There was a newspaper published away down in Texas, called the *Rosenberg Herald*. It was a great friend of the author though published so far away. It appeared to be a case of spontaneous admiration. Its editor would copy the author's productions that appeared in the public press and herald them to its readers with great enthusiasm. In the midst of the many jolts that a man who essays to write verse gets anyway, our Texas friend would always come up smiling with a word of cheer. We learned to love him, and count on his weekly message as the words of a sure friend who never faltered and who never grew cold.

We noticed his name was Morrison, but what of that? One day we wrote him a letter thanking him for his kindly and loyal support. In a few days his reply came, and then we found that he was a Shelby county product, like unto ourself, that he was one of two sons of a family of thirteen children of our old classmates and friends, Harry C. Morrison and Laura Ray Morrison of Shelbyville, and that he had been boomerang us because he felt that nearness and kinship which dear, old associations give. In other words, the "Heart Echoes from Old Shelby" stirred within him.

So as a compliment to him and to his paper alone, we wrote the poem, "If You Knew" and sent it to him and he published it. It has never been submitted to any other paper before or since.

But the saddest thing remains yet to be told: This brilliant, young man, *our friend*, has since the events above narrated, sickened and died. Such a lovely character, coming out of such a worthy home, so beloved and with such a prospect before him, with the glory of the dawn almost still shining in the clouds, "dropped into that dreamless sleep, that kisses down the eyelids still!"

IF YOU KNEW.

If you knew of the heavy burdens
That lie so close to my heart;
If you knew of the trials and the temptings,
That have ever been mine from the start,
That have hampered and hobbled my efforts
When my soul in its zeal fain would soar,
My Brother, I know you'd have patience,
And judge and condemn me no more!

If you knew all the things that were shaping
To control and weaken my life,
E'en before I had looked on the sunshine,
Or gazed on this world and its strife,
I know it would soften your rancor
At the weak, puny race I have run,
And you'd say in your soul: "Oh, my brother,
It's a wonder how well you have done!"

If you knew, sometimes when I'm silent
And fail to speak as we meet,
That my fondest ambition is lying
Crushed and wrecked at my very feet,
And I was then brooding in sorrow
To see thus my fair castles fall,
Would it be in your heart, oh, my brother,
To chide me or blame me at all?

How often these trials come upon us
Each one as we journey along,
And we lose the sweet face of the morning,
Though in fact we're intending no wrong;
And then if each one to another
Would patience and mercy e'en show,
The world would be sweeter, my brother,
And better to live in, I know!

“YE SAGE OF MENLO.”

Cable Address “Edison, New York.”

From the Laboratory of Thomas A. Edison,
Orange, N. J., May 5th, 1915.

Mr. Douglas Dobbins,
Franklin, Ind.

Dear Mr. Dobbins:—

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favor of the first instant, enclosing a poem entitled “Ye Sage of Menlo,” which I have read with a great deal of interest and gratification. I do not see any objection to your publishing the poem if you see fit to do so.

Let me assure you of my appreciation of the kind sentiments expressed.

Yours most truly,

THOMAS A. EDISON.

“YE SAGE OF MENLO.”

Ah, ye grizzled sage of Menlo,
That with genius keen and rare,
Has discovered hidden forces
In the earth and sea and air;
You have such a wondrous magic—
At least, it's what I've heard them say—
Pictures you can make of people
That can talk in life-like way!

If you can, ah, sage of Menlo,
I've a task I fain you'd do,
There are certain faces absent
I desire once more to view;
Scenes I saw in earlier moments
When my life had all before,
And my heart with radiant dreamings,
Paused at manhood's open door!

Can you with your apt machinery,
With your gift of magic art,
Make a thing with love and feeling
That will simulate the heart;
Make kinetoscope so wondrous,
That it can, just like the soul,
Travel back o'er vanished pathways
And their scenes once more unroll?

I would see my dear old mother,
As I saw in days long gone,
And my father in the gloaming
Standing there upon the lawn,
And the old home as the shadows
Kissed it softly into rest,
I would see just as the sunset
Faded from the golden west!

For it seems sometimes, Oh, Wizard,
That I'm hungry just to see
Once again the dear, old faces—
Can you bring them back to me?
Baffled have I been so often,
Chased mirage the live-long day,
That my buoyant, dauntless courage,
Seems to me, has died away!

Like an old and jaded sumpter,
With the harness on his breast,
I would turn away from duty,
Seek a pasture land of rest;
Once again commune with mother,
Hear my father tell once more,
Of the old time and the Injuns
As he did in days of yore!

You can't do it? You're no wizard,
And you don't deserve the name,
There's a gross exaggeration
In the herald of your fame;
Seems to me if I had magic
I would make the pictures tell,
Of these dear, old homes and people,
And 't would pay you mighty well!

DAY DREAMS OF YOUTH.

I imagine at times I still hear the soft chimes
Of those drowsy, old sheepfold bells,
Coming gently once more from the silence of yore,
In mine ear how their melody dwells.

And I hear down the lane, the subduing refrain,
Of the farmer away down the field;
His sonorous tone wakes the woods deep and lone,
As the echoes more softly are pealed.

And old silly Bob White when the storm has passed quite,
Still whistles the whistle of yore,
As he calls his fond mate from the top of the gate,
To come and be frightened no more!

Through the rumble and roar of the city e'er more,
As I sit at my desk day by day;
These sounds sweetly steal through my soul and I feel,
Like a stranger from home far away!

In my throat there's a lump—yes, I know I'm a "chump,"
And mine eyes they are misty with tears,
But this block I would give only once more to live
Again in those innocent years!

POET LAURY—ATE.

Jist got a premyum list, you bet—
The Shelby County Fair:
They've placed a "Hon" before my name—
Now, boys that ain't jist square!

An' that's not all the trouble
I set out to relate,
For just behind my fambly name,
Is "Poet Laury-ate."

Now, what kin you imagine
'D I ever do to them,
To hit me jist below the belt
With sich a punch an' vim?

An' what has "Laury" got to do,
Don't keer 'f she drank ur ate,
You'll cause a fuddle in my home,
Wife she'll investigate!

And then you know she's liable,
As sure's the crack of doom,
To introduce t' your patient friend
The bald headed end of a broom!

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

(Written for the Ben Kennedy School Reunion and at their request.)

We thank you for your party words,
You've sent us down to cheer;
And they've 'pinted us commitay
For to write up somepin clear,
That'll kind a 'spress our feelin's,
And kind a let ye know,
How much we love our Riley
Since the days o' long ago.

But darn it, when we try to write
A resolution strong,
And put *whereases* in it
They somehow come up wrong;
We'd kind a choak up, so to speak,
An' splutter all around,
And when we read 'em to ourselves
They somehow jist won't sound

Like nothin', so we say,
God bless ye, Riley, anyway!

To this Mr. Riley's secretary replied:

"October 29, 1914.

"Mr. Riley sends his fervent appreciation of the verses, together with his kindest regards to * * *. He found the verses inspiriting and he thanks you with all his heart. His inability to use his right hand makes it impossible for him to express his appreciation personally.

Very sincerely yours,

..

TO CHARLES MAJOR.

(The following lines were written January the first, 1909. A copy of the same was sent to Mr. Major who was then living at Shelbyville. He responded immediately with words of the most sincere thankfulness, but asked that the poem be not printed at that time, but held as an expression of love and sympathy between old friends. The author feels that "Heart Echoes from Old Shelby" would not be complete without some reference to this sweet and gentle genius who has passed away. And what could be more appropriate than a message of appreciation given long before his death, and which he sincerely enjoyed?)

Oh genial, splendid, worthy soul,
No proud success can mar
That innate sense of courtesy
Which makes you what you are.

Fame cannot turn that noble head,
Nor make that fond heart cold,
But sweeter, kindlier every day,
Your friendships new and old!

That rare combine of Irish wit,
And British common sense,
Is scarce surpassed in this our day
In verse or eloquence!

The struggling bard may ready find
A wisher well in you,
For never envy filled a breast,
So broad and warm and true!

An author, too, may climb beside
Your place in Fame's great hall,
But never any stroke from you
Will cause the dolt to fall!

Old friend of youth, I hail your fame,
And toss my hat in air,
And humbly wish that more success
May bless a mind so rare!

THE WATCHMAN.

(This poem is respectfully dedicated to the First M. E. Church of Shelbyville—the famous tithing church—the author believing that they who pay heavily for the accomplishment of great spiritual victories will be interested in the discussion which these verses present.)

The Watchman standeth on Zion's wall
Where the sil'vry moonbeams softly fall.

The Watchman is old, his eyes grow dim,
And his stately form is gaunt and thin.

And his long scant beard is white as snow,
For long hath he watched and waited so!

He glanceth north where the great lights play—
The caravan's trail went forth that way.

Then to the line where the southern cross
With faintest glow the sky may gloss.

Then to the west where the sun has set
With promise of morn the brightest yet!

Then to the east he turneth his view,
And seeth what's hid from me and from you.

For those streaks of light and rays of gold,
A precious promise to him unfold;

And he hails the dawn of a better day
Than mortal has ever known or may!

The sentry astir looks up and calls
To the silent figure upon the walls:

“Oh, Watchman, Watchman, look here, oho!
How speedeth the night?” is asked below;

He answers back with glance o'er the sand:
"The Day, the promised Day is at last at hand!"

The Day when law o'er force shall prevail;
When the curse of rum 'mongst men shall fail;

When no heathen tribe shall on earth be found,
And peace, sweet peace, in all lands abound;

When the righteous Sun, with wings outspread,
To the utmost isles shall healing shed!"

Written February 2, 1909.

OPTIMISM.

My friends, the sunlight fair is breaking
O'er the hills and far away;
Morning brings a better era,
Brings God's blessed, newborn day!

Will you help to spread this sunlight,
With a shining face toward God?
Or will you hide like wretched savage
In Wrong's cave and den of sod?

As for me, oh, gracious Father,
Let me haste and run with glee,
Run to meet this radiant morrow,
Help to bring it speedily!

WHEN I HAVE WON.

When I have won! When I have won!
Oh, bright will be the sheen of sun;
The flowers will bloom beside my way;
The birds will sing that happy day;
The world now frowns on struggling me,
But then 't will smile so cheerily—
When I have won!

When I have won! When I have won!
The noble deeds that I have done,
The world now fails to know or see,
But then 't will praise those things in me,
Nor turn its back so cold and drear
When I shall speak, nor dull its ear—
When I have won!

When I have won! When I have won!
The awful race that I have run;
The heat and burden of the day
That I have borne along the way,
I'll sit beneath the bower and tell—
The battle o'er I fought so well!—
When I have won!

When I have won! When I have won!
Though old and scarred and almost done,
I'll not regret the fearful fight
That raged around me day and night,
But thank my God who reigns above
Who kept me through it all in love,
When I have won!

THE TWO WORTHIES.

Dr. W. T. Stott, for many years president of Franklin College.
Rev. Father Kaelin, long time pastor of St. Joseph's, Shelbyville.

One born of Anglo-Saxon stock;
The other came from Teuton source;
But both of sturdy, honest race,
With courage set for arduous course.

One raised in later sect and fold;
The other from that pulpit shrine,
That down the ages holding firm,
Maintains a strong unbroken line.

But both in early youth were fired
With zeal for Christ in ev'ry part,
And sought as flitting years went by,
To do his work with loyal heart.

And spite of friction set by wrong,
For long, long years each has withstood.
In ev'ry way, at ev'ry time,
An arduous battle for the good.

They've sought to help their fellowman,
Long diff'rent paths each course has led,
But by the same sweet love within,
They've been sustained and comforted !

Like two pure streams from distant hills,
Their lives began in far-off ways,
But have come nearer oceanward
As swiftly passed their active days.

Their work consigned by time and place
In two Christ folds so far apart;
Unconscious of this parallel,
But with his love in each fond heart !

And as we gaze upon their lives,
And view their deeds with broader scope,
Shall not our souls enlarge, expand,
And this become our tend'rest hope:

That like these streams from variant hills,
They shall come nearer, nearer each,
As year by year Life's volume fills,
Until upon Time's golden beach
It shall to each of them be given
To glide together into heaven!

SENATOR SLACK AND THE LAW'S DELAY.

Senator Slack is great in his way,
And has made us a speech on "The Law's Delay;"
He certainly has the subject down pat,
The whole thing in detail "under his hat;"
Of all of the men in the range of my view
L. Ert is the best such thought to pursue;
He says the whole thing is the lawyer's fault,
And he ought to know without hitch or a fault.
He's a lawyer, you know, and from winter to spring,
He's hummin' around at every old thing;
And from spring to summer, and thence on to fall,
He's busy at politics, speakin' and all;
And we other lawyers must wait without fail
Till Senator Slack comes in from the trail;
And so when he says with his broad, pleasant grin,
"It's the faults of the lawyers!" we just say, "Amen!"

THE OLD CHOIR.

(Some ten or twelve years ago, the Franklin, Indiana, M. E. church choir was one of the best in Indiana. Its leader was Senator L. E. Slack, now United States District Attorney, and a politician of note. Among its members were Anna Laura Johnson, a very famous soprano; Mrs. Clara Hannaman, of the Woman's College, Baltimore; Mrs. Daisy Strickler Lacy, now of Missouri, and a number of others. This choir has long been abandoned and another has taken its place. Recently there was a "home coming" in old Franklin, and the "Old Choir" was gotten together. And the people were delightfully entertained by their singing. That occasion has furnished the theme for this poem.)

From eastern seaboard and western plain
The "Old Choir" members came home again,
And sang with sweetness and hearts aglow
The dear old songs that they used to know;
And mine eyes grew moist though not with pain—
'Twas the patter of memory's sad, sweet rain,
That came with the clouds and the sunshine clear,
That we used to love in a bye-gone year!

And I sat in tears, a lump in my throat,
As the old choir sang again note upon note,
And it seemed to me that each old time score
Sounded far better than ever before;
And the dear, sweet faces and silvery hair
Appeared to me never before so fair,
And I wished I could sit in a way back seat,
And hear 'em forever, it was so sweet!

And I prophesy now, though I'm not a seer
And the prophecy brings me a smile and a tear,
That each dear member at calling o' roll
Will find a way home to the heavenly goal,
And sing for aye in that grand, new choir
With an old-time faith but a new-born fire;
And the dear, old past, may it join a hand
With the golden future—at God's command!

THE AUTHOR'S STANDARD.

There are those who believe a great poet
Should cater to evil and wrong,
Should live such a life as Lord Byron,
Or else may sing never a song
That the harsh, old world will honor
As it moves in its course away,
And never may fame or great glory
Be his at the close of the day!

And others believe this assertion :
One must an agnostic be ;
He must flout at the Truth in his rhyming,
And pretend it's a deep mystery ;
He must say, "Maybe 'tis, or it isn't,"
"Perhaps, it is thus and so,"
And always respond in the testing :
"Why, really, I just do not know!"

But, believe me, the old world is hungry,
Just as hungry as children at play,
For the old, sweet truths of the gospel,
To be told in the old, sweet way ;
They want to be told of the Christ life,
They want to see lives pure and sweet ;
They want to lay down all their doubtings
At the beautiful Savior's feet !

Then let me be true in my rhyming
To the sweetest conception of truth ;
And, too, let me sacrifice daily,
To live as I'm writing in sooth ;
Let this be my prayer and my effort :
To write pure and clean ev'ry day ;
And then make my life in God's presence
To correspond thus with my lay.

And let it be said, oh, my Father,
When my record is closed here below,
And the cavalcade moves from my dooryard
With its measured step and slow:
"He wrote while he lived some sweet poems
That have softened our day's toil and strife,
But sweeter than all of his poems
Was his beautiful, Christ-like life!"

THE IDYL OF YOUTH.

I love so to dream of a day that has flown
With its tender and delicate grace;
And to see once again a form I have known,
And a lovely and innocent face;
Oh, Idyl of youth, farewell, farewell—
The years flowing on in their ebb and their swell,
May never thy raptures erase!

And oftentimes I wish I could throw away care,
And be happy and youthful once more,
When my heart was as light as the zephyrs of air.
As I danced through the day dreams of yore;
But Idyl of Youth, farewell, farewell;
My life is as sad as a monk in his cell,
As lonely as drifts on the shore!

And yet, sad heart, is there never a balm
In the sweet land of Gilead, no?
Is there never a brook, nor tall, branching palm,
Where we pause and refresh as we go?
Yes, Idyl of Youth, farewell, farewell;
But a happy, old age where faith and hope dwell,
May come with the years' ebb and flow!

THE CHRISTIAN HERALD.

Oh, beautiful, beautiful Herald,
That comes with a message of hope,
And tells of the Master's far vineyards,
With the whole wide world as its scope!

It tells the news of the missions,
And the stations of help far and near,
How Love is engaging the legions
Of prejudice, hatred and fear!

How the tidings of mercy, forgiveness,
That came with the Nazarene's birth,
Are driving the clouds and the darkness
From the far away corners of earth!

How "Thy kingdom come," not a theory,
But a potent and life-giving sway,
Like the sun coming up from the southland,
Melts the icebergs of doubt all away!

How the wonderful arm of the Master,
Without suffering or bloodshed or pain,
Is conquering the legions of error,
And restoring Immanuel's reign!

When the sword shall be beaten to plowshare,
And the spear into pruning-hook turned,
And in all of the Lord's holy mountain,
No home and no hamlet is burned!

A MODEL CRITICISM.

It's a good, old rule, the golden rule: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them." We offer this model criticism as a suggestion to that tribe of dawpluckers who shall follow after the publication of "Heart Echoes from Old Shelby." The selection we shall take is from the pen of Mr. T. B. Carey, better known as "Gid," long time paragrapher, wit and homely philosopher. Not only all these, but a poet, as we shall show. We shall use but one short selection from his pen, as follows:

"I once possessed a Thomas cat,
That warbled like Caruso;
A boarder threw a baseball bat;
Now Thomas doesn't do so!"

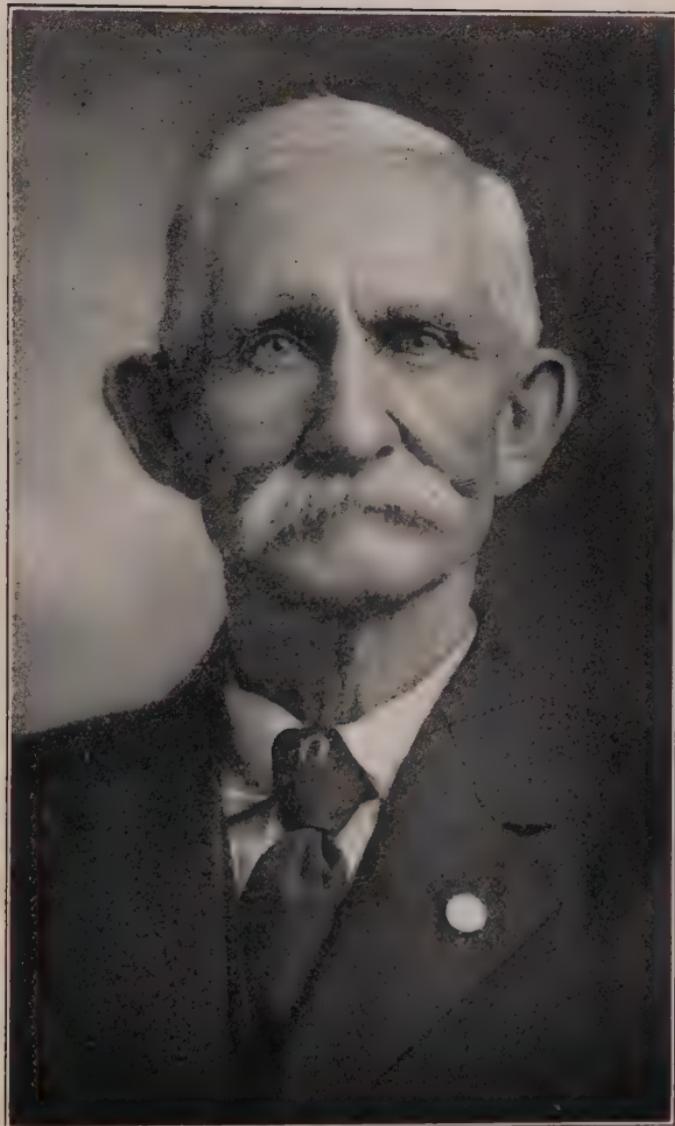
The basis of our criticism is just and kind, namely: We resolve all doubts in favor of the poet. We shall concede at once that "Gid" actually possessed such a feline. Though a trifle singular, we shall likewise admit that it or he possessed the capacity of "warbling" like the sublime Italian tenor.

Of course, no details are given respecting any boarding house, nor how a "boarder" plain and simple happened upon the scene at this unauspicious interval. "Gid" barely gives us a skeleton, and leaves all the rest to our own fertile imaginations! Happy thought! Felicitous faculty!

Then again, he leaves us in the dark as to whether Mr. Thomas Cat was struck by the bat or simply frightened. Wise discretion! Members of the S. P. C. A. are thus left undisturbed. To them, the bat simply struck the fence whereupon Thomas "warbled," and frightened him out of every note. But to us who have suffered sleepless nights caused by Thomas' "warbling," we can conjure up thoughts of complete annihilation, and they fill our mad, abandoned souls with a savage, exultant joy! Ah "Gid," what a diplomat thou art!

And then the conclusion, sublime from its very simplicity:

"Now, Thomas doesn't do so!"



T. B. CAREY.

The old master could take his brush and with a few touches of color portray the widest range of human passion, and so does "Gid," with just five short, simple words, he lays before us a pen picture vivid in detail to the last bridle hair!

In short, we conclude, agreeably to our system of criticism, that the verse is perfect in every detail, and we insert it in "our" book even at the risk of placing another on the proud pedestal we had hoped to occupy. Moreover, to show you how broad and unenvious we are toward our rivals, we insert "Gid's" picture in his best "bib and tucker," so to speak, for the edification of our readers.

The Author:

I wish I hadn't written half I've writ;
It's neither great in wisdom nor in wit;
I know I'm not sublimely big nor tall,
A few bright intervals, a few, is all!

The Reader:

The reader shook his mat of hair,
"A sentiment we all may share!"

THE OLD DEBATING CLUB.

(During the latter part of the seventies and the earlier eighties, at the Morrison school house, two or three miles south of Shelbyville, in Shelby township, there flourished a famous debating club. The colder the weather, the deeper the snow, the wilder the wind, the better the people attended. Many men since successful in the various walks of life were among its members. Judge Joseph W. Thompson, the famous law book writer; Ed K. Adams, David L. Wilson, prominent lawyers, were among the number of those who attended its sessions. Some used good English, some bad, some none at all, but "everything went." The club was democratic from the ground up, no supercilious nabobs went there. A large number, both members and attendants, have since gone over "the Great Divide.")

Oh did I ever tell to you,
Or'n any way relate
Of the famous club we used to have,
The Morrison j'int debate?

Morrison school house was the place
Most four decades ago;
When we all went a-trooping down,
'Twas better than a show!

Ed K. Adams took a hand,
And Davy Wilson, too,
And Joseph Thompson, smooth and fine,
And all the Tindall crew!

Dog Gone! It makes me smile again,
I think o' Jesse Wray,
And Robert Hearn and Willard Barnes,
A havin' each his say;

And old man Sexton lumbered in,
As long as any pole,
And landed honest argyments
In language quaint and droll;

And Jeptha Humphries, too, was there,
And Dayton Stafford wise,
And Will Clendenning talked so fast,
It made the steam rise !

Don't talk about the wisdom
Of Demosthenes and such,
Why, Cicero, if in the race,
A tail he couldn't touch !

The questions that we argyed,
And settled then and there
Have lain rale still for forty year,
And never raised a hair !

Who's heard o' slavery ever since,
Compulsory education,
Or punishment by death or chair
Or Chinese immigration ?

And Wimmin's rights, we had 'em up,
And argyed one full session ;
And talked about the Pope o' Rome,
And Luther's bold digression !

With horse the cow we did compare,
And often fire and water ;
The pen was mightier than the sword,
And made the greater slaughter !

The warrior bold and statesman wise
We pitted 'gainst each other,
In Honest Abe for Washington
The good we tried to smother !

Then said the chairman lookin', wise,
And poundin' on the table :
"The judges may decide the thing,
If now, indeed, they're able !"

Some were old and some were young,
But all were brisk and fiery;
Our arguments were mostly wrong,
Our reasoning was miry!

The green, green grass above the grave
Of many now is growing,
And leafy trees their branches wave,
And idle cows are lowing!

Those tongues so rife with earnest speech,
Those minds so strong to reason,
Have slumbered long beneath the beech
In many a changing season!

And we, the ones who still endure
And bear life's toil and tumble,
Are we the happy ones for sure,
Amidst this constant rumble?

And they though gone so long away,
And now so silent lying,
Are they made worse 'midst time's decay,
These bitter years defying?

I cannot say, I do not know,
In doubt these things I'm guessing;
Perhaps, a distant day will show,
To die is greater blessing!

OLD CYNTHY ANN.

I'm goin' back to Cynthy Ann,
The hamlet on the hill,
To wander down her quiet streets
And loaf around the mill;

I lost my leg at Gettysburg,
Where 'midst the shot and shell,
An' screamin' o' the wounded boys,
I got my dose o' hell;

I've tried a power o' different things
Since then in this world's field,
But ever'thing has left me
Save my age an' wound unhealed!

Since last I saw the old home place,
It's many years ago;
I've been into a sight o' things
Since then, as you may know!

They's lots an' lots o' houses
That kin beat old Cynthy's best,
An' many wilder, grander scenes
Than 'round the village rest;

The people that I've met away,
Some dress so awful trim,
Old, pladdin', homespun Cynthy Ann
Ain't swift enough for them!

But down in dear, old Shelby
The folks air kind an' dear,
An' not so hifalutin'
As to greet you with a sneer,

An' kind o' look down snifflin'
At your ugly, wooden leg,
An' shut the door again ye,
An' never move a peg!

So I'm goin' back to Cynthy Ann,
The hamlet on the hill,
To wander down her quiet streets,
An' loaf around the mill!

An' when the call I've answered,
An' the deadened drum-beats sound,
I'll take my last long slumber
In her old buryin' ground!

OCTOBER.

Old October, she's a comin',
Don't you smell 'er on the breeze,
And by the looks of all the trees?
Bumble bees so idly hummin',
Old October *is* a comin'!

Old October, she's a comin',
With her fruits and harvest brown,
And the nuts jist rattlin' down,
And her breezes softly thumbin'
With the leaves—October's comin'!

THAT OLD-TIME HOME O' MINE.

By Ging! I'm gettin' hungry
Jest to go back home again;
I can see the old scenes loomin' up
As clearly now as then;
I can peer along the vista
Of a score of years or more,
And the golden sun's a-shinin' down
As in the days of yore!

I can see the dear old faces,
I can hear their laughin' tone,
Just like I ust to hear them
In the summers long since flown;
And my heart leaps high with rapture,
While a thrill runs down my spine,
When I think onct more o' goin'
To that old-time home o' mine!

What a multitude of joys there were
And many sorrows, too,
Attending on those early years
When life and love were new,
And youth with glowing fervor
Was a-thrill in ev'ry limb,
And the world was yet to conquer
With a boy's unconquered vim!

Let me eat again the viands that
I ate in boyhood's days:
There's nothing now tastes half so well,
Though cooked in stylish ways;
Oh, what a splendid relish—
Just a bowl of milk and bread,
And my mother standin' by me
With her hand upon my head!

Let me sleep beside the window
Where the morning glories grew,
And the sun in golden patchwork
At the dawning glinted through,
Making me to dream so grandly,
As the years should onward roll,
Of my course of future greatness—
How it thrilled my boyish soul!

I'm so sorry that my waking years
This path have never known;
That upon my years of struggle
Small success has ever shone;
But it makes the harvest sweeter,
Though the fruit be gnarled and rare,
Just to know we've dreamed of heaven
And have had our standards there!

Let me wander in the woodlands
Where I loved in youth to tramp,
A-buildin' airy castles
Like Aladdin with his lamp,
Where the birds that sang above me,
And the flowers that bloomed beside,
Were like sermons preached from heaven
With a message glorified!

They tell us now in science
That the flowers all bloom for seed,
And the birds that sing around us
Simply call their mates, indeed,
But I love the old-time notion
That my mother taught to me,
That the birds are minstrels praising God
In field and bush and tree.

I've lingered long away from home,
I've lived midst other men;
I've passed along the highway where
I ne'er may walk again,
But I'd give a chunk of heaven
Just as big as I could hold,
With a brace or two of angels
And a pavement made of gold,

Just to take old-time's machinery,
As a man would take a clock,
And turn its wheels all backward
Without a break or shock,
'Till the old days came upon me
With a swish of glory rare,
And the long-forgotten faces
Shown around me everywhere!

And I wonder, up in heaven,
Where it's awful nice and fine,
All burnished up in glory
That'll far the sun out-shine,
If the Lord who loves His children
Hasn't somewhere in the skies,
Just such a blest arrangement
For their rapture and surprise!

THE CENTENNIAL PARADE.

I stood beside the street-way
Amidst the jostling throng,
All waiting for the pageant
That was soon to pass along;

Some with word and imprecation
Wondered why they didn't come,
'Till far down the smothered highway
Came the beating of a drum.

Then upon my startled vision
Came in stately, long review
The pioneer and cabin
And the days of grandma, too;

I saw the act repeated
Of Washington, the lad,
Who with his thoughtless hatchet
Cut the cherry-tree for dad;

I heard the Injun warwhoop
As he hustled 'long the trail,
And I saw the old-time mother
With her anxious cheek and pale;

Then I saw the sturdy pioneer
With axe and rifle true,
And I thought how much that humble man
Has done for me and you;

How he carried on his shoulders
The future's mighty weight,
And by his toil and sacrifice
Has builded up a state!

Then I peered into the coming years
With rapt, prophetic view,
As I saw a greater vision
Coming down the avenue;

I saw disease prevention,
Saw the wondrous works of Art;
Heard the onward sweep of Music
As it echoed thru my heart;

Saw the school house growing grander,
With its banners flying high;
Saw the triumph of "Old Glory"
As it swept the crystal sky!

And I said: "Go on and ever
This my glorious state and true,
Let the future still be grander
As the years come on anew;

Let us lay aside those actions
That have marred in days agone,
And have given pain and sorrow
To the orphan pale and wan;

That have filled the earth with sadness,
Filled a thousand hearts with woe,
As the proud hosts marched to battle
In the days of long ago!"

Those were val'rous deeds we grant you,
And our grandsires brave men all;
We have no words of chiding
As their actions we recall;

But with FAITH we face the future
With its heaven-lit stars above,
And we know that then triumphant
Shall approach the reign of LOVE;

When we'll climb to grander altitudes
Where Christ shall walk beside
The greatest and the lowliest,
Each life be glorified;

When hate and wrong, suspicion
And prejudice and fear,
Shall pass from out the human heart
And never re-appear.

Yes, blow again the trumpet
And beat the sounding drum,
And toss your banners high in air,
This day must surely come,

When BROTHERHOOD o'er all the earth
Shall claim its sure reward,
And we'll see the world's redemption
In the blessing of the Lord !

FACES OF THE YESTER YEARS.

Way down in Shelby county is the place where I was born;
The sun, it seems, shines clearer there and taller grows the corn;
My early days in clear relief stand clearly cut and bold
As clouds against the evening sky all tinted up with gold!

I can see those scenes o' long ago, in life's sweet, precious morn,
When the roses all were bloomin' fair and hidden ev'ry thorn;
When I walked the earth with boundless faith in youth's brave
fancies free,
And all of life's bright vagaries seemed beckoning to me!

There flowed the stream close by my home, the sun reflecting far
Like bridal gown, with diamonds decked, in orient bazaar;
The trees were green and shaded o'er where birds in joyous mirth,
Sent forth their anthems to the day announcing love on earth!

And then the old school houses and the benches and all that,
And the teachers of those olden days who taught me "ba-ty", bat;
There was one named "Billy" Conner who was courtin' then and
there
Of as sweet a little lady as had ever breathed the air!

In the lull of recitations that would come the foll'wing day,
The teacher to himself would smile and then we kids would say:
"He's thinkin' of Mahaly, 'cause he loves her awful well;
Right soon they're goin' to marry—that's what the gossips tell."

Poor "Billy's" long since passed away, and sweet Mahaly, too;
How beautiful were both their lives in pattern good and true;
And thus in rainbow shadows fit the dreams of long ago;
But still I love to think them o'er and shed a tear or so!

And then the girls I used to love—my wife's not standing near?—
There was full a half a dozen and each one passing dear;
There was one with flaxen ringlets and a dainty, turned-up nose,
And her cheeks, in memory's picture, seem as red as any rose:

She'd come to school barefooted, and 't was pantalettes she wore—
They're clean gone out of fashion, p'raps, to come back never-
more!

But I tell ye girls and women, if men's hearts are like my own,
When I was but a little boy and only partly grown,

Just to dress a little daisy as was dressed my Katie dear,
And put on 'broidered pantalettes—'t would beat the costliest
gear!

I don't know where my Katie is, some forty years have flown;
The love that once so thrilled my heart has long since been
unknown;

And other loves and passions have thronged into my life;
(I've got to use some caution, since another is my wife!)
But I might say, *she* not hearing, had I never met the dear,
I might have loved sweet Katie through many a passing year!

Ah, these pictures flit before me like the pictures on a screen
With their old-time dash and color, long the shifting years
between,

And I sit in life's calm evening, while the light burns dim and
low,

And watch their dear, sweet faces as they softly come and go!

MY NOISY YOUNGSTERS.

I love always to sit in my study,
And be a philosopher wise,
For silence and deep meditation
Are the things most highly I prize;

But my two little, scampering youngsters,
They go through the house with a howl;
I follow their echoing footsteps
With glance very much like a scowl!

Then I think of the days of *my* childhood,
And the things I loved the most then,
And I see that what pleases the children
May not suit at all for the men!

There are folks who would fain make the children
Do ever the things they would do;
Would find for the tots joys and pleasures
In paths that men daily pursue;

But sweet is an untrammeled childhood.
Such romping and riotous glee;
Its running and jumping and playing—
It makes my heart young just to see!

And I brush back the tear-drops that gather,
When I think of the paths they must tread,
The troubles and griefs of the future
They must bear, perhaps, when I'm dead!

Play on, oh, my brave, little darlings,
No shadow of grief dims your day,
And I wish this old back could yet carry
The loads ye must bear all the way!

THE VALLEY DOWN THE RIVER.

There's a valley down the river
Where the grass is always green,
Where no wind blows cold and chilling night or day;
Where no ghost of crushed ambition
Ever struggles up between
The bright and golden visions by the way.

Where the faces of our loved ones,
Those who long ago were gone,
Come a smiling in upon us as we dream;
And all the time or night or day
Is just like rosy dawn,
So blest and truly happy people seem!

And the roses grow no thorns between
In all the valley there,
No insect pest makes ravage of the leaf;
And no scourge or wasting illness
Blasts our darlings bright and fair,
Our treasures never fall unto the thief!

And with hearts aglow in kindness,
Oft we meant our neighbor good,
And we did some helpful deed to warm his soul:
Such are never warped or questioned,
Nor we misunderstood,
While back our kind intentions on us roll!

Where they'll know our hearts are leal and true,
And loyal as the sky,
And no twitting man or maid shall every say:
"He lived a double life while here,
And one was e'er a lie,
And that is why we're glad he's gone away!"

You say this valley's ne'er been found
In all this mundane sphere?

You say such things cannot exist on earth?
I must admit, oh, friend of mine,
From weary year to year,
Not yet to me have such things had a birth!

But oh, above my ev'ry task,
While I struggle to be brave,
The valley down the river I can see;
By purling brooks its groves of palm,
Their signal branches wave,
I know this land somewhere awaits for me!

And oh, it lessens much my care,
My burdens lighter grow,
The road before me shortens, so it seems,
When I see this valley drawing near,
Its sunset tints aglow,
This blessed, lovely valley of my dreams!

For the token that my King has given
In rainbow colors bright,
Shines from ev'ry gloomy cloud of doubt and fear,
And some day I shall awaken,
From the dark and silent night,
And find at last this summer land is here!

MY MOTHER'S LAST SONG.

A multitude of years has passed away,
My head is whitened o'er with winter's bloom;
Upon my limbs succeeding seasons lay
Such stiff'ning chains as prophesy the tomb!
But yet, to-day, as I glance briefly o'er—
It seems as if 'twere yesterday to me—
The intervening years beyond a score,
My mother's dying face and smile I see!

Her sickness such we knew she soon must go;
Her friends her bed of pain had gathered 'round;
Her pastor there, with voice subdued and low,
Among God's saints he prayed she might be found;
Then voices joined in singing sweet and soft,
"Thou lover of my soul," this was the strain,
And as the precious thought was borne aloft,
The suff'rer from death's stupor raised again.

And with a voice as rich and sweetly clear,
As when she sang to me in childhood's day,
And I upon her knee was wont to hear,
She joined the singing of that old-time lay:
"Into thy haven guide!" 'twas thus she sang,
"And, oh, my soul receive at last!" her prayer;
How grandly through my soul the music rang,
It seemed a burst of angel song were there!

And with a smile of radiant sweetness she
Passed on from earth to stand before God's throne!
Lo, I since then have sailed life's fitful sea,
Ofttimes by waves and stormy winds o'er blown,
And question when the tide rolls wild and high
Shall I the haven make or helm far wrong?
But of my mother doubt nor question I—
She went to heaven singing that blessed song!

My heartfelt prayer it is when comes that hour,
And I shall bid farewell to friends around,
I pray, oh God, for mother's grace and power
To shout and sing Thy praise with joyful sound;
And then, methinks, I'd love to sing once more,
That same old song—"Thou lover of my soul!"
Above the din, serene amidst the roar
Of wildest storms of death that 'round me roll!

THE VISIONS OF A DAY IN JUNE.

Oh, the June-tide brings me visions
 Of a former, happy day,
When I walked in artless boyhood
 Down along life's rosy way;
Then it seems the sun shone fairer
 And the air was far more sweet,
When the day bloomed forth in glory
 As it came my youth to greet!

I can feel again the rapture
 Of those far-off, sunny days
When the heat goes waving upward
 In a distant, dreamy haze;
From the cornfields and the meadows,
 The woods and pointing spire
I can see the sun's reflection
 Like a gleam of golden fire!

And the highways and the hedges
 Where the roses and the Lind
Give a breath of dainty odor
 Borne away on every wind,
There' the birds are chanting loudly,
 And the bee's dull, sturdy hum
Keeps the time of pulsing nature
 Like the beating of a drum!

Ah, these well-known scenes around me,
 Like the ticking of a clock,
Set the psychic wheels in motion,
 Beating "tick" and beating "tock";
The kaleidoscope of fancy
 Is alive with figures, too,
And again, the dear, old faces
 Come a-trooping back to view!

Olden day dreams long forgotten
Come a-thronging through my soul,
As within the eye of fancy
Rarest visions o'er me roll;
And I welcome with a moistened eye
These dear, departed scenes,
That are set in rapid motion
When the past unrolls her screens!

Precious faces, so enchanting
With the hallowed gleam of youth,
When my life held out before me
Naught to learn but love and truth;
Ere I conned the sad, sad lesson
Since received with bitter tears,
That the world is false, and Aidenn
But a dream of bye-gone years!

In the land of dear old Shelby,
In the days of long ago,
Where I spent my youth and boyhood,
There these faces blessed me so,
And it seems that ev'ry by-way
Has a halo of delight
That is bending down above it
Like a rainbow clear and bright!

And adown these ways I wander
With the whisp'ring leaves o'erhead,
And I hear once more their voices,
Precious voices of the dead,
In the old tones long forgotten
Of the old days long gone by
When my heart was soft and tender
Like a baby's lullaby!

Oh, how sweet these old-time fancies,
 Sweeter far than rhyme or song,
That come sweeping down upon me
 Like a radiant, angel throng;
How I long to grasp and hold them,
 Tucked and steeped in love sublime,
And forever have them with me
 Safe from wreck of age and time!

We have all had dreams of heaven,
 You've had yours and I've had mine;
Some folks think they'll feed on honey
 And wear silv'ry garments fine;
Some think they'll walk on pavements
 Burnished bright with shining gold,
And will need no lamps for lighting,
 Neither suffer from the cold!

Some will strike their harps celestial
 And will join the blissful choir;
Others stretch their rainbow pinions,
 Soaring higher still and higher;
But to me the greatest glory
 That shall bless the heavenly way,
Is to meet my old-time comrades
 With no thought of parting day!

THE END.

